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SUSAN WATKINS

Vichy on the Tigris

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### 'ALLIANCE FOR ETHNIC EQUALITY': Tensions in Taiwan

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### ÇAĞLAR KEYDER: The Turkish Bell Jar

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## BENEDICT ANDERSON: Rizal's Worlds

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JACOB STEVENS on Gareth Stedman Jones, Introduction to *The Communist Manifesto*. Intellectual antecedents of the trumpet blast of 1848. Must today's critics lower their political horizons?

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SUSAN WATKINS

*Editorial*

## VICHY ON THE TIGRIS

His Majesty's Government and I are in the same boat and must sink or swim together . . . if you wish me and your policy to succeed, it is folly to damn me permanently in the public eye by making me an obvious puppet.

*King Faisal I to the British High Commissioner,  
Mesopotamia, 17 August 1921.<sup>1</sup>*

RARELY HAS A passage of powers been so furtive. The ceremony—held two days ahead of schedule, deep within Baghdad's fortified Green Zone—lasted just ten minutes, with thirty US and Iraqi officials present. Outside the cement stockade, the military realities remain the same: an Occupation force of 160,000 US-led troops, an additional army of commercial security guards, and jumpy local police units. Before departing, the Coalition Provisional Authority set in place a parallel government structure of Commissioners and Inspectors-General (still referring to themselves as ‘coalition officials’ a week after the supposed dissolution of that body) who, elections notwithstanding, will control Iraq’s chief ministries for the next five years.<sup>2</sup> The largest US embassy in the world will dominate Baghdad, with regional ‘hubs’ planned in Mosul, Kirkuk, Hilla and Basra. Most of the \$3.2 billion that has been contracted so far is going on the construction of foreign military bases.<sup>3</sup> The UN has resolved that the country’s oil revenues will continue to be deposited in the US-dominated Development Fund for Iraq, again for the next five years. The newly installed Allawi government will have no authority to reallocate contracts signed by the CPA, largely with foreign companies who will remain above the law of the land. Two thirds of the cabinet ministers are themselves US or UK citizens.

Iyad Allawi, hailed in the Western media as the blunt, independent-minded leader the country needs, is an appropriate appointment as prime minister. Little secret is made of the fact that, like his counterpart Karzai in Afghanistan, he has been a paid CIA agent for many years; the time is long past when that was considered something to hide. Allawi's career to date has more than qualified him for his present role. Iraqis recall him as a Baath enforcer in London student circles of the 1970s, with a bogus medical degree conferred by the regime for services rendered. According to an ex-INA colleague, he was simultaneously dealing with MI6 and running a Mukhabarat death squad for Saddam's faction, targeting Baath dissenters in Europe, until falling foul of it himself in 1978.<sup>4</sup> After a few years in hiding he resurfaced in Amman, co-founding the Iraqi National Accord in 1991 with Salih Omar Ali al-Tikriti, a former supervisor of public hangings in Baghdad. The INA specialized in recruiting military and intelligence defectors; the bomb blasts attributed to it in the mid-90s—one in a crowded theatre, another killing schoolchildren on a bus—were purportedly 'proficiency tests', set by the CIA. Duly persuaded of the INA's merits, the Agency provided funding for Allawi's botched coup attempt of 1996 which, uncovered by Saddam, resulted in over a hundred executions. He was subsequently responsible for passing on the intelligence that prompted Blair's claim of 45-minute WMD delivery systems, and pinpointed Saddam's supposed bunker for bombardment at the start of the 2003 Iraq War.<sup>5</sup>

With the Occupation in place, Allawi was put on the Governing Council in charge of security. His campaign for the post of prime minister—his lobbying firm spent over \$370,000—was naturally run in Washington,

<sup>1</sup> Telegram from the High Commissioner, Mesopotamia, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The British had been concerned lest King Faisal 'did not realize what degree of control we expect him to submit to' Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* [1978], London 2004, p. 324. Many thanks to Sami Ramadani and others for their comments and observations. They naturally bear no responsibility for what follows.

<sup>2</sup> A CPA-appointed official on the Communications and Media Commission in charge of media licensing explained that 'they can kiss goodbye to any European funds' and 'considerable US resources would be withheld' if there were any attempt by the interim minister to disobey the Commission *Financial Times*, 5 July 2004.

<sup>3</sup> *Economist*, 26 June 2004; *Financial Times*, 5 July 2004.

<sup>4</sup> For former INA propagandist Dirgam Kadhim's account: Eli Lake, *New York Sun*, 17 January 2004; Seymour Hersh, 'Plan B', *New Yorker*, 28 June 2004.

<sup>5</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 7 December 2003.

not Baghdad.<sup>6</sup> Once appointed, he embarrassed his masters by attempting to proclaim martial law before his inauguration. His colleague Ghazi al-Yawar, Iraq's new president, made a comparable show of independence by demurring from Bush's proposal to blow up Abu Ghraib: it would be a pity to demolish the prison when the Americans had spent so much money on it. (Yawar, an obscure telecoms manager in Saudi Arabia when the us established contact with him not long before the invasion, began dressing up in Shammar tribal robes as soon as he was put on the Governing Council; perhaps a tip from Karzai in Afghanistan.) Similarly, the first act of the interim Human Rights minister, Bakhtiyar Amin, was to announce state-of-emergency legislation. His predecessor on the Human Rights portfolio, a fellow Kurd, had resigned in disgust at the torture photographs from Abu Ghraib; Amin has showed no such compunction.

### *Character of the resistance*

That it has taken Washington over a year to establish such a threadbare front—Karzai was parachuted into place in Kabul within a matter of days—is testimony to the strength of the resistance. In June 1940 the French Army, like its modern Iraqi counterpart, collapsed in face of the German *Blitzkrieg* without a serious fight. Within a month French National Assembly deputies gathered at Vichy had voted, 569 to 80, in favour of a collaborationist regime under Marshal Pétain.<sup>7</sup> The Vichy government was swiftly recognized by the us and other powers, and the majority of non-Jewish French settled down to life under the Occupation. It was two years before the *maquis* began to offer serious resistance. Elsewhere in Europe, the pattern was similar. The Germans were efficient in organizing indigenous support: Quisling in Norway, the Croatian Ustashi and ss-trained Bosnian and Kosovar regiments in Yugoslavia, Iron Cross in Romania, Arrow Cross in Hungary. In their classical form, twentieth-century resistance movements were slow to constitute themselves. Those that did appear nearly always had external

<sup>6</sup> For the sum Allawi's hired lobbyists Theros & Theros set up meetings with Bill Frist, Richard Lugar, Dennis Hastert, Tom DeLay, Henry Hyde, assorted National Security Council officials, vp's office, Defence Department and cia, as well as getting Allawi a column in the *Washington Post*. See Ken Guggenheim, *Associated Press*, 24 January 2004; Jim Drinkard, *USA Today*, 2 June 2004.

<sup>7</sup> For the comparison, see Tariq Ali, 'Postscript', in the paperback edition of *Bush in Babylon*, to be published by Verso in October 2004.

state support. If the Allies' supplies were crucial to the anti-Nazi underground of Continental Europe, the general pattern was much the same in Asia or Africa. Chinese weaponry was a condition of Vietminh victory, as Egyptian and Tunisian backing was for the FLN in Algeria. Typically, such foreign help functioned in conjunction with an already existing political leadership and party network with a potential for hegemony at national level, as with the local Communist movements in France, Italy or Indochina.

The resistance that has emerged over the past year to the US Occupation in Iraq fits none of these categories. It began early, the first armed attacks erupting in May 2003, within weeks of Baghdad's fall. It escalated over the summer, as demonstrations and street protests were regularly fired upon. ('The apprentice is gone, the master is here' was the chant of the million-strong march on Karbala that spring.) The initial hit-and-miss harrying of the Occupation force—roadside devices, rocket-propelled missiles, amateurish shelling of the CPA compound—had developed by August 2003 into assaults on strategic military and diplomatic targets: the Jordanian Embassy, the UN compound. By November US forces were suffering heavier losses, with the insurgents bringing down helicopters. Vicious reprisals led to a further escalating spiral. Like any other military occupation, the Anglo-American regime has been one of sanctioned murder and torture; the resistance to it has been savage, too.<sup>8</sup> Suicide raids, car bombs and mortars have sown havoc in the big cities. Attacks on US forces doubled between October and December 2003, from around fifteen to over thirty; by June 2004 they had risen to an estimated forty-five a day. Increasingly sophisticated assaults on pipelines and pumping-stations (estimated at over 2,000 in the past year) have cut oil exports for weeks at a time. Yet the simultaneous rebellions that broke out across the Shia south and Sunni centre in April 2004, and the joint Shia-Sunni convoy from Baghdad to Falluja, have done most to trigger the alarm of Western and Arab governments—prefiguring a national resistance leadership, to be avoided at all costs. Meanwhile, CPA polls measured the solid bank of popular support behind the fighters: some 92 per cent of Iraqis saw the US troops as occupiers; only 2 per cent considered them a liberation force.

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<sup>8</sup> For a vivid portrayal of the mindset of alienated US troops—a cocktail of gun culture, video games, pornography and deracinated violence—see Evan Wright, *Generation Kill*, New York 2004; the prevalence in US prisons of the methods of humiliation practised in Abu Ghraib has been well documented.

Nor has the Iraqi resistance received support from any foreign state. Externally, it faces a front of unprecedented official hostility—a global unanimity unimaginable in any previous age. UN Security Council resolution 1546, passed on 8 June 2004, extends unqualified support to the CPA-appointed regime, conferring the full legitimacy of the ‘international community’ on its collection of old CIA hands and carpet-baggers.<sup>9</sup> Explaining that the country—lacking an army, and with a transparent absence of WMD—‘continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security’, it authorizes the US-led occupying force to take ‘all necessary measures’, ie, whatever American commanders deem fit. All UN members are, of course, bluntly prohibited from supplying arms or material to the Iraqi people. France and Germany offered the comedy of a request that sovereign control over the Occupier’s army be entrusted to the Iraqi façade it has manufactured—only to be told by Allawi and Yawar that Paris and Bonn should ‘not be more Iraqi than the Iraqis’, who desired only that the US command ‘keep them informed’.

In the Middle East itself, the Arab states have played their accustomed role. The governments that rallied to Washington in the first Gulf War—Cairo, Damascus, Riyadh, Tunis, Algiers, Rabat—have stuck with it through the second, with Amman now rapidly catching up. Algeria voted for resolution 1546, Syria for its predecessor 1511 in October 2003. Mubarak has offered the services of Egypt’s security services to train the new Iraqi *gendarmerie*, while simultaneously backing Israel’s *razzias* in the Gaza strip. King Abdallah is providing parade grounds in Jordan and has readied his troops to help out. The wider Islamic world has proved equally reliable. In June the fifty-seven states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference met in Istanbul to pledge their support for the Occupation’s native face—Karzai logically in the lead. Erdogan, their host, has not only offered Turkish troops for Iraq but hurried to participate in Washington’s Broader Middle East initiative, at which even Mubarak balked. Iran has helped keep the southern clergy quiet as the Americans ring the shrine cities of the Shia heartland. In Pakistan, Musharraf is bombing his Waziri subjects on US instructions.

Politically, the Iraqi resistance has been heterogeneous and fragmentary, lacking the established party networks crucial to most previous

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<sup>9</sup> Current UNSC members, in addition to the Permanent Five: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Brazil, Chile, Germany, Pakistan, Philippines, Romania, Spain.

anti-occupation movements. It includes Nasserites, former Baathists, secular liberals and social democrats, multi-hued mosque-based networks, and splits from the collaborationist Iraqi Communist and Dawa parties. American observers have commented on the social breadth of an opposition that draws on support from nearly every class, both urban and rural: 'Its ranks include students, intellectuals, former soldiers, tribal youths, farmers and Islamists'.<sup>10</sup> Ideologically, nationalism and islamism—'for God and Iraq'—are potent calls, but there are elements of Third World anti-imperialism and pan-Arabism too. It remains to be seen whether these groups can establish some equivalent of a national liberation front, to unite religious and secular groups around the central demand for the expulsion of all foreign troops.

### *Subjective resources*

Externally isolated and internally unsynchronized, the Iraqi *maquis* nevertheless possesses a number of distinct resources. First, strong social networks: resilient clan and extended-family connexions; city neighbourhood quarters that retain some cohesion; mosques that offer a safe local gathering place, unimaginable in occupied Europe. Arab writers have pointed out the attendant weaknesses of these forms: particularism, local rivalry, lack of coordination, the treachery or opportunism of unaccountable demagogues, a fringe of criminality—though within this fluid, oral and highly mobilized environment, leaders can also be forced into taking more resolute stands, to retain their supporters.<sup>11</sup>

Second, the considerable quantity of arms that the resistance has at its disposal. American estimates—three million tons of bombs and bullets, AK47s, rocket launchers and mortar tubes, plus the artillery shells used to make roadside bombs—may be inflated. But unlike previous anti-occupation movements, plagued by lack of arms, it seems likely that the Iraqi guerrillas have sufficient explosives to harry the occupiers for years to come. Shock-resistant, these weapons have to be painstakingly dismantled, one by one; an attempt to blow up an ammunitions stack

<sup>10</sup> Ahmed Hashim, 'Terrorism and Complex Warfare in Iraq', Jamestown Foundation, 18 June 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Points made in the last essays of the novelist Abderrahman Munif (1933–2004), published as *Al-Iraq: Hawamish min al-Tarikh wa al-Maqoumah* [Iraq: Footnotes from History and Resistance], Beirut 2003.

simply scatters it, unexploded. The US has only a few hundred engineers in Iraq capable of the task.<sup>12</sup>

Third, the natural dislike of any people for a foreign occupation has been reinforced by the stark deterioration of social conditions since the Anglo-American invasion. In much of the countryside, the long-term agrarian crisis—salination, pump failure, silted canals—is worsening as agribusiness imports increase. Rising rural unemployment has swollen the slum populations of Basra and Baghdad. In most towns outside the North, small businesses have been hit by a combination of cheap foreign goods and the breakdown of law and order. Much of Iraq's shrunken 1900s-era industrial sector—already skewed towards arms production during the Iran–Iraq war, then targeted by Western bombs in the 1990s—faces not privatization but closure, putting a once-skilled workforce on the street. Two-thirds of the pre-invasion workforce may now be unemployed. As for the future, promotional literature for the country as a regional trade hub—a giant Dubai, handling freight operations for the Greater Middle East<sup>13</sup>—offers Iraqis little more than a distant prospect of integration into the global economy as baggage handlers and warehousemen. A deepening social crisis is concealed behind the daily military communiqués, and the tangible Occupation presence provides a ready target for its frustrations.

Fourthly, the resistance can draw upon vivid historical memories of battles finally won against the last imperial occupier. The modern Iraqi nation is a creation of the struggle against British colonialism, after London seized Mesopotamia from Istanbul in 1917. The countrywide uprising in the summer of 1920—small tribal sheikhs and sayyids along the Euphrates joining with ex-Ottoman officials in Baghdad and hard-hit northern merchants from Mosul—forced London to retreat from direct administration on the Delhi model. Its solution, ‘ruling without governing’ as the Secretary of State for the Colonies later defined it,<sup>14</sup> was to set up a monarchy dependent on British arms for survival, backed by a League of Nations Mandate authorizing ‘all necessary measures’. The British High Commissioner remained the highest power in the land and, when

<sup>12</sup> Evan Wright, ‘Iraq’s vast arsenal’, *International Herald Tribune*, 18 June 2004.

<sup>13</sup> See for example the effusions of Joseph Braude, *The New Iraq*, New York 2003, pp. 132–3.

<sup>14</sup> That is, ‘exercising control through an ostensibly independent native government’: L. S. Amery, Foreign Office Memorandum, 7 February 1929.

the Mandate expired, the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty guaranteed British control over Iraq's foreign policy, seaport, railways, airbases and, in times of war, security forces. Compliant local notables signed up to the Treaty, willing to forgo external independence—as one of them put it—as long as they had internal control. The majority of the population rejected it. When resistance broke out in 1922, the British High Commissioner arrested political leaders, banned nationalist parties and famously subdued rebellious tribes with punitive bombing and mustard gas.

But despite London's efforts to foster conservative landlordism in the countryside, packing tame national assemblies with loyal sheikhs and fabricating a 'manly' desert image for them, urban social forces could not be held down indefinitely. In 1936, social-democratic lawyers and civil servants joined forces with nationalist officers in a short-lived coup d'état. The nascent Iraqi Communist Party began organizing rank-and-file soldiers. Strike waves swept the Basra docks, Baghdad railway workshops, Najaf weaving factories, Kirkuk oil fields and Habbaniyah military base. In May 1941 the pro-British Regent, the Crown Prince and the Prime Minister Nuri al-Said were forced to flee abroad when pan-Arab officers with mass nationalist backing seized power and abrogated the wartime provisos of the Treaty. The UK had to re-occupy the country to restore imperial control, returning the Crown Prince to Baghdad in a British tank.

In January 1948 popular anger at the recycling of the Treaty<sup>5</sup> and at the British role in Palestine set off an insurrectionary movement in the capital, mingling middle-class students and nationalists with communist railway workers and slum-dwellers. In November 1952, another rising pitched them against Hashemite troops and police in the streets of Baghdad. Four years later riots erupted in Najaf and Hayy against the Anglo-French-Israeli attack on Egypt. Finally, in July 1958, a Free Officers' coup toppled the monarchy with the backing of both Communists and Baathists (at that time a small party with under a thousand members). Huge crowds clogged the streets to block any counter-revolution, as the Republic of Iraq was proclaimed by a left-nationalist government led by Abdul-Karim Qasim, and the door to national independence and social reform opened.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Now 'oiled over with the idioms of mutuality' in the form of the Portsmouth Agreement: Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, p. 550.

<sup>6</sup> It was the strength of the Iraqi Communists in this crucial Middle Eastern state that prompted the first, CIA-backed coup by the Baath Party, oil and business interests in 1963. For the US role as described by King Hussein of Jordan, see Batatu, *Old Social Classes*, pp. 985–6.

Iraqis are well tutored in these battles, the ABC of their modern history. But the past rarely offers exact analogies, and to view contemporary events through its lens highlights differences as well as similarities between the old imperial occupation and the new. Militarily and politically, the machinery of American power in Iraq today is far more formidable than Britain's was. With 160,000 troops at his disposal, Negroponte has a greater vice-regal command of violence than the British High Commissioner ever possessed. American control of Iraqi harbours, airports and security forces—not to speak of courts, education, trade, finance, media and foreign policy—has been given the UN seal, with a force of 'international law' going well beyond the bilateral Anglo-Iraqi Treaty. Washington's coffers are deeper than London's ever were, and today's oil revenues were undreamt of in the 1920s. The capacity of the Occupation to buy consent to its rule is far higher. It can also hope to rely on the sheer exhaustion and dislocation of life after March 2003 to create a desperate longing for some semblance of normalcy, under new arrangements that promise to transfer, however nominally, elements of sovereignty back to the country.

### *Prospects for the Green Zone*

It would be a mistake therefore to think that nothing has changed since Bremer flew out of Iraq. As in the German-occupied Europe of 1940–41, native collaborationist regimes typically offer an initial degree of relief, after the humiliation of foreign invasion, as well as lucrative business or administrative positions to servants of the new order. The puppet government in Baghdad today enjoys far less autonomy than Pétain's regime in Vichy; in that respect it is closer to Quisling's in Oslo. But it has a basis of support from an array of privileged groups in the post-invasion landscape—not just carpet-baggers on CIA or MI6 payrolls but technocrats, eyeing career opportunities; a large swathe of the semi-expatriate bourgeoisie and the sanction-busting *nouveaux riches*; traditionally collaborationist rural families like the Yawars, leaders of the Shammar tribe in the Mosul region, who sided with the British in 1920; and the large Kurdish population in the North. For the moment, the regime also enjoys the tolerance of the Shia hierarchy around Ayatollah Sistani; Tehran still seems bent on appeasing the US. Washington can hope at least to keep the situation out of the news headlines in the run-up to the US elections. It may yet recoup its adventure with the stabilization of a client state—if the *maquis* can be crushed or co-opted before they sap too much domestic support.

All this, however, must contend with the general detestation of the Arab population for the American occupation itself. The foreign hand is everywhere visible in the new Iraq. Even in the North, where us troops are scarcely needed, the Kurdish leadership has installed a network of Israeli intelligence agents and hit squads, the culmination of its disastrous record of political misjudgements, if in a legitimate cause.<sup>17</sup> If its client regime is not to be permanently associated with American bombers, tanks and jails, the us urgently needs an effective native enforcement body.<sup>18</sup> It is one measure of the resistance's strength that, despite the unemployment levels, enlistments by June 2004 were lagging at 10 per cent of planned figures, and the loyalty of new recruits was still in doubt. It remains to be seen whether Allawi's attempts to brigade or buy over former Baath officers will produce better results.

On the ideological front there is little more light. The hazy electoral horizon already appears to be in doubt. Under rules endorsed by UN resolution 1546, the January 2005 polls (if they are held) will choose candidates selected by the us Embassy for a 'transitional' administration with strictly limited powers, charged with drafting a constitution for a further, equally restricted ballot by January 2006. In the meantime, a hand-picked, one-thousand-member consultative conference may or may not be called into being, to discuss appointing a smaller, equally consultative, body from amongst itself.<sup>19</sup>

Internationally, the regime and its masters look forward to strengthening their position by planting the UN flag once again in Iraqi soil. So far the

<sup>17</sup> The Pentagon has issued no denial of Seymour Hersh's detailed report in the *New Yorker* of Israel's qualitative expansion of its long-standing security foothold in Iraq's Kurdish provinces, training units of the 75,000 *peshmerga* in *mistaravim* commando tactics for operations in Iraq, Iran and Syria. According to a former Israeli intelligence officer, the Israeli leadership had concluded in August 2003 that, in terms of rescuing the situation in Iraq, 'It's over. Not militarily—the United States cannot be defeated militarily in Iraq—but politically'. 'Plan B' would attempt to salvage an independent Kurdistan, with access to Kirkuk's oil, as a strategic platform in the region. Hersh, *New Yorker*, 28 June 2004.

<sup>18</sup> Even if it wants it on the cheap. 'It is clear that a desire to reduce costs and cut corners was a big factor in the Pentagon's choice of Ukrainian gear . . . Dozens of us military suppliers revealed their disappointment at the minimal requirements: not even ballistic protection for troop carriers, or air-conditioning for ambulances. *Financial Times*, 18 June 2004

<sup>19</sup> Elections for university deans held, as scheduled under the previous regime, in the summer of 2003 returned solidly anti-Occupation candidates; the CPA swiftly cancelled the mayoral polls due in their wake.

Secretariat has not dared to return to Baghdad—and with good reason. Infant mortality under the UN sanctions regime in the 1990s caused on conservative estimates some 300,000 deaths of children under five from disease and malnutrition, while the Secretariat skimmed administration fees of over \$1 billion. In December 1998 the UN contracts committee, working out of the Secretariat's office, awarded the 'oil for food' programme contract for monitoring Iraqi imports (of often rotted food and diluted medicines) to Cotecna Inspections, a company which employed Kofi Annan's son Kojo as a consultant throughout the bidding process.<sup>20</sup> In June special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, a leading member of the junta that cancelled elections in Algeria in 1992, and broker of the Karzai regime in Afghanistan, rubber-stamped Bremer's selection of members of the Governing Council for reincarnation as ministers of the Interim Government; but, duty performed, could not wait to get out. When they do come back, UN functionaries will need a large private army of their own to protect them.

### *November and after*

Formally speaking, the Anglo-American invasion has been stripped of its original pretexts. There were no weapons of mass destruction. Human-rights violations have branded the liberators. The need to bring democracy to Iraq, let alone the rest of the Middle East, has become less pressing. It is the strength of the Iraqi resistance—and it alone—that has led to widespread uneasiness in the Western establishments. Washington think tanks have begun to debate exit strategies, estimating the costs to US political credibility ('high, or unacceptable?'), assessing 'indicators for withdrawal'.<sup>21</sup> The American electorate has turned against

<sup>20</sup> Cotecna's undemanding task was to issue Confirmation of Arrival certificates for goods containers passing through Umm Qasr port or the Jordanian border crossing at Trebil, triggering payments from the UN escrow account into which the proceeds of Iraqi oil sales were paid. The UN contracts committee reports directly to the Secretary-General, who signed off on all the 6-monthly phases of the programme. The Secretariat is currently refusing to release details of Cotecna's fees to Congressional inquiries into the Kofigate scandal. In May 2003 the UNSC gave it six months to 'tie up loose ends' before administration of the oil funds switched to the CPA that November; in the process, 25 per cent of contracts were scrapped, as companies had either disappeared or were unwilling to sign on without the 10 per cent kickback that the UN was now hurriedly eliminating. See Therese Raphael, *Wall Street Journal*, 11 March 2003; Claudia Rosett, *National Review*, 10 and 21 March 2004.

<sup>21</sup> See for example the April 2004 Centre for Strategic and International Studies Policy Forum, 'Iraq: on the Precipice'.

the war since April 2004: 56 per cent of voters now think the invasion was a mistake. The images from Abu Ghraib have weakened the authority of the White House.

Yet those who shook their heads at the pre-emptive proclamations of the 2002 National Security Strategy have been unwilling to see it founder. With the upsurge of resistance in Iraq has come a flood of liberal imperialist advice on how to run the Occupation better. Joseph Nye laments the paucity of American tv channels capable of beaming us soft power into the Arab world. Anthony Cordesman offers recipes for more effective interrogation of prisoners. Michael Ignatieff, after deplored the painful moral juxtapositions that even sullied Reagan's funeral, warns that 'America cannot abdicate its responsibility'. Andrew Moravcsik explains: 'Europeans may find the next Iraq is a Kosovo, and they want America to intervene'.<sup>22</sup> Though celebrations have been muted, the UN-sponsored installation of a hireling regime in Baghdad has been all but universally hailed in the Western media as a 'positive step'.

From those who opposed the Anglo-American invasion in 2003 on the grounds that it lacked UN legitimization, or that sanctions were doing the job, there has been, understandably, a deafening silence about the future of the Occupation, broken only by murmurs about deadlines. For many, opposition to empire has been reduced to abhorrence of Bush. But the Bush administration has already implemented every step in the Democrats' programme: handover to an Iraqi government, with UN blessing and NATO involvement, as in Afghanistan. Hopes that a Kerry Administration would significantly alter current us policies in the Middle East are futile. As Clinton's foreign-policy lynchpin Strobe Talbott recently explained: 'The Bush administration was right to identify Iraq as a major problem. A President Gore or McCain or Bradley would have ratcheted up the pressure, and sooner or later resorted to force'.<sup>23</sup> Kerry backed the invasion, will retain the Patriot Act, supports Sharon's security policies and is calling for an extra 40,000 active-duty us troops and a doubling of special forces capability. On present showing, a vote for him is little more than another bullet for Iraq. In this sense, the Bush revolution has succeeded; it has produced its heir. Whatever its colour, the next

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<sup>22</sup> Respectively: Nye, 'America needs to use soft power', *Financial Times*, 18 April 2004; Ignatieff, *New York Times Magazine*, 27 June 2004; Moravcsik, *Financial Times*, 26 June 2004.

<sup>23</sup> 'The Burning of Bush', *Financial Times* magazine, 26 June 2004.

us administration will attempt to consolidate its position there. It will not be the November polls that decide the fate of the march on Baghdad. The reality is that, so long as hard blows continue to be inflicted by the resistance on the occupying army and its clients, domestic support for the recolonization of Iraq will drain away, regardless of which multi-millionaire sits in the White House.

The same holds true of Europe, where Paris and Berlin have predictably hastened to patch up their relations with Washington and approved NATO engagement to support its Baghdad regime; in the case of Chirac, sealing the pact with the Franco-American invasion of Haiti, and UN-backed overthrow of the constitutional government there. The rifts that, eighteen months ago, supposedly threatened the Atlantic alliance have been ceremoniously buried in the Normandy sands, in County Clare and Istanbul. Washington's military-imperialist thrust into Central Eurasia, at first deplored by right-minded pillars of the status quo as an over-reaching adventure, has become the basis of a new world consensus: the hegemon must not be allowed to fail. The first, elementary step against such acquiescence is solidarity with the cause of national liberation in Iraq. The us-led forces have no business there. The Iraqi *maquis* deserves full support in fighting to drive them out.

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## PREFACE

*The presidential elections held in Taiwan this spring were widely felt within the island to be a critical moment in its history. A day before polling, incumbent candidate Chen Shui-bian, leader of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), was grazed by a bullet from an unknown assailant, while touring his hometown in a jeep. The ensuing sympathy gave him victory in the election by a handful of votes over his Kuomintang opponents. The mystery surrounding the shooting incident, and the tiny margin of advantage it yielded, generated heated controversy. Massive demonstrations by supporters of the Blue camp—the KMT and its allies—protested against the upshot of the poll, claiming fraud by the Green camp—the DPP and its allies. Behind this political polarization lay, among other issues, tensions between the different communities that make up Taiwan's population, about two-thirds of which is of immigrant descent from southern Fujian ('Minnan' speakers); another ten to twelve per cent of Hakka origin, mainly from Guangdong; some fifteen per cent mainlanders who arrived in the island as KMT refugees in 1949; together with a third of a million aboriginal inhabitants of the island, of Malayo-Polynesian origin.*

*Concerned that a divisive identity politics, playing on ethnic frictions rather than resolving them, might loom large in the electoral campaign, a distinguished group of intellectuals, artists and activists formed an Alliance for Ethnic Equality before it started. Below is an interview with four of its founders. By common consent Hou Hsiao-Hsien is one of the world's greatest film directors, whose cinema has offered a series of unforgettable portraits of Taiwanese history and society. Chu Tien-hsin is an accomplished novelist, with more than a dozen works of fiction published, of which one of the latest—The Ancient Capital—will shortly appear in English. Tang Nuo, pen-name of Hsieh Ts'ai-chün, is a leading critic and publisher, author of six volumes of essays. Hsia Chu-joe teaches architecture and planning at National Taiwan University, and has written widely on urban space and architectural theory. He has also translated Manuel Castells' trilogy The Information Age into Chinese. The interview, which covers a range of social, cultural and political issues, as well as relations between Taiwan and the mainland, was conducted a few days after the presidential election.*

HOU HSIAO-HSIEN, CHU TIEN-HSIN,  
TANG NUO, HSIA CHU-JOE

## TENSIONS IN TAIWAN

*How did the Alliance for Ethnic Equality start? What immediately inspired it?*

**H**OU: I was not myself the initiator. Among our friends is a journalist from the *China Times* called Yang Suo. A colleague of his, Yu Fan-ying from the paper's foundation, told him that questions of ethnicity were likely to become very divisive during the election campaign, and we should get together and discuss this prospect. Many people including Tien-hsin, Tang Nuo, Chu-joe and I went there. After three or four meetings, we decided to set up the Alliance for Ethnic Equality. We wanted to warn against electoral manipulation of ethnic issues by either the Blue camp or the Green camp during the campaign. That's how the organization was set up. I was chosen to be the convenor, because I seldom say anything about political topics and am well known in Taiwan—or, as I said, I had a selling image. We started to work before the Chinese New Year, in January.

TANG: No guesswork was needed to anticipate that ethnic conflict would be whipped up again this time. It happened in each previous election, so we had a lot of experience of this. Chen Shui-bian, running for re-election as president, was at quite some disadvantage when the campaign started, and he supposedly represents the Minnan, the largest ethnic group in Taiwan. It could only benefit him if the issue of ethnicity became a major election topic, so it could be expected he would make a lot of play of it. In fact, it looked as if this might be the most serious case of identity politics ever in Taiwanese elections. That's why we set up this Alliance. Hou Hsiao-Hsien was selected because he had no political colour. In Taiwan, people tend to ask about your standpoint before you have even spoken—they want to know which side you are on. Most of

the other members of the Alliance have long been involved in variously-coloured social movements; therefore they could be easily categorized as belonging to one side or another. Hou is a person without political hue. There was no vote—he was approved by acclamation.

*Is it the case that democratization in Taiwan has paradoxically sharpened tensions between the different communities in the island, compared to the period of the dictatorship?*

Hou: Yes. To some extent that was inevitable. In the 1970s, under the authoritarian rule of the KMT, an opposition sprang up that was already closely related to questions of ethnicity—islanders versus mainlanders—which persisted through the *Formosa Incident*.<sup>1</sup> But after martial law was lifted by Chiang Ching-kuo in 1987, there was a change of fronts. For two decades the opposition movement had always used the signifiers of nationalism. But after 1988, when Chiang Ching-kuo died and Lee Teng-hui succeeded him, for the first time a Taiwanese became President. That was a dramatic shift. The old mainlander forces within the KMT were increasingly marginalized by Lee, who started to cooperate with local forces, and to rely on so-called ‘black channel’ (*heidao*) and ‘black money’ (*heijin*) sources, connected to mafia and other interests. In that period, Lee and the opposition party, the DPP, were on the surface adversaries, but under the table they were supporting each other, since they both wanted to found a Taiwanese state, and based themselves on this project. So in that respect they were at one. In the election of 2000, the KMT split, allowing Chen Shui-bian to become president, to the surprise even of the DPP itself. Over the next four years, Chen’s administration performed very poorly, leaving him in a weak position in the opinion polls before the election this year. So he intensified nationalist appeals, calling for the building of a nation-state in Taiwan, and labelling the Blue camp fellow-travellers of the CCP.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In August 1979, an opposition journal named *Meilidao* (Beautiful Island, ie: Formosa) appeared, publishing articles critical of the lack of social justice and democracy in Taiwan, which soon gained such popularity that it became the focus of a broad public movement. When it called for rallies to celebrate International Human Rights Day in December, the police broke up the demonstration held in Kaohsiung, and then arrested and tortured eight of its leaders, who were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

<sup>2</sup> Acronyms: KMT (Kuomintang); DPP (Democratic Progressive Party); CCP (Chinese Communist Party), PRC (People’s Republic of China), ROC (Republic of China).

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The DPP had been promoting 'localization' during his four years' administration, a policy affecting all areas of life, education and culture. The accumulation of measures had already generated very clear antagonisms. Many people in Taiwan felt increasingly perplexed. For instance in education, they wanted children to learn Minnan. Then there were protests—others saying that this could not simply be taken as the language of Taiwan, and questioning whether Hakka should not be taught as well. Since the government wasn't principled, it added Hakka. Then aboriginal languages were also considered. The result was to make life miserable for pupils in our elementary schools. It is the same thing in government offices, in municipalities or in Taipei. Since we have Chen as president, a chairman of a meeting may give a speech in Minnan. If anyone in the audience questions this, he will be upset. But no-one has decided to make Minnan the official language of the island yet. Such confusions now arise everywhere. For example, Minnan has suddenly appeared in the examinations for the civil service. But most applicants cannot understand it, since Taiwan has now experienced quite a lengthy period of economic growth and urbanization, producing a new social mixture in the cities. Mandarin has been taught in our schools for a long time, but now all of a sudden Minnan is required in national exams, with questions people often cannot understand, let alone answer. In this sense, so-called localization is simply Minnanization, excluding everything else. This is a programme of 'de-Sinicization', as some of its supporters term it, which continuously appears in each domain, and arouses strong repugnance. Since it got under way, we have had a more or less serious sense of being threatened.

TANG: You've asked whether there is a paradoxical relationship between democracy and ethnicity here. We should be able to avoid this in Taiwan, and in fact it's generally believed that ethnic conflicts in Taiwan are not serious among Hakka, Minnan and mainlanders, since these communities are not distinguishable in religion, dress, occupation or lifestyle. There are some genuine ethnic tensions, but these focus rather around the original inhabitants of the island, the native Taiwanese, and the new immigrants from contemporary Southeast Asia or elsewhere. But if the issue of ethnicity has nevertheless become so central in public life, this is not as a serious social phenomenon within the majority groups on the island, but rather as a product of political struggle. Most people would concede this. The KMT arrived from the mainland after the war and established a dictatorship that excluded the islanders from much

political participation. Therefore when the opposition movement started, before the lifting of martial law, it wore two kinds of colours. One was localization, the colour of Taiwan. The other was that of the Left, because the KMT was a right-wing political party. But quite soon, the Left was driven out of the political arena. Between localization and the Left, the movement chose localization. When Lee Teng-hui took over as the first Taiwanese president, the opposition lost much of its *raison d'être* because an islander was already in power. From that time on, the 'ethnic' question started to change character, in a dynamic culminating in the 2004 presidential election. It was no longer an opposition between islanders and mainlanders, but between Taiwan and the CCP in Beijing. Nationalism increasingly became a convenient way of avoiding social realities, problems in the economy, education and culture. It was also, of course, the best instrument for battling against the KMT. This is the mechanism the French scholar René Girard has described in his writings on the scapegoat. When the nation faces an external crisis or threat of invasion, it is the best moment for a ruler to call for unity and to ask for a blank cheque from the people. The KMT happens to be a party originally from the mainland. Therefore, from the later period of Lee Teng-hui through to the earlier period of Chen Shui-bian's administration, ethnic manipulation in Taiwan changed from local community conflicts to the forging of a new nationalism. However, since the US and PRC have agreed there is only one China, and Taiwan is part of it, this involves a project that cannot be talked about too openly. The result is a form of nationalism that is deeply ambiguous, suspended in a strange way somewhere between calling for Taiwanese independence and operating within the existing ROC. Ethnic tensions themselves were not a particularly serious social problem, and could have been gradually reduced within Taiwan's established democratic framework. Their fanning today is a pure product of political power struggles.

*If one were to make a comparison with Ireland, where the south was traditionally nationalist and the north unionist, and popular stereotypes of each community long persisted—Catholics regarding Protestants as oppressive, unimaginative and dull, Protestants viewing Catholics as lazy, slovenly, irresponsible, and so on—has there been anything like this in Taiwan? Such prejudices are capable of producing quite a lot of suspicion and tension in daily life, apart from any political manipulation of them. Has there been any analogy in the relations between Minnan, Hakka and the mainlanders who came to Taiwan at the end of the 1940s?*

TANG: Taiwan differs from Ireland in the lack of any religious factor. In earlier times, Hakkas, Minnan and mainlanders typically formed separate communities, each of whose lifestyles were slightly different. There were contrasts of music, language, and the position of women in the family. For example, Hakka women tended to be very strong in character, whereas Minnan women had a much lower status. Mainlanders had once been very patriarchal, but when they were separated from their original clans, and found themselves in a new setting on the island, couples endured the suffering of exile together—the older generation having usually stayed behind on the mainland—and so relations between them became more equal. From the sixties onwards, however, Taiwan's economy grew rapidly, and as society became more and more urbanized and intermarriage increased, a point was reached where it became difficult to tell by appearance or by accent which ethnic group a person born after 1960 came from. Some of the Hakkas, where they are still concentrated in self-contained highland communities, form an exception.

You also have to remember that our situation is very different from that of Ireland, because historical hatred and bloodshed have been so much less. The killings of the local population by KMT soldiers and police after the events of February 28, 1947 were for long a deep wound in memory. But actually the 2.28 Incident was not the most enduring political repression by the KMT. That was the White Terror of the 1950s, targeting the Left. The 2.28 Incident lasted only a few days, whereas the White Terror persisted for many years, with a huge gap in the victim tolls of the two. Neither of them were truly ethnic conflicts, but state political oppression of the population as a whole. The 2.28 Incident was in a sense an accidental conflagration; whereas the White Terror was a deliberate, concerted drive by the right-wing KMT regime to destroy any opposition to it from the Left.<sup>3</sup> Logically, the later revolts against the KMT in Taiwan should have been mounted from a position on the Left. But economic growth increasingly reconciled workers to their lot. Rising living standards gave them hope, while rebellion carried high risks. Moreover, developments in mainland China, once the Cultural Revolution was launched,

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<sup>3</sup> On February 28, 1947 a spontaneous rising by islanders against KMT misrule erupted in Taipei, which then spread to other towns. Chiang Kai-shek dispatched troops from the mainland to crush the revolt, killing somewhere between 8,000 and 20,000 people, and possibly twice that number. The White Terror began after Chiang Kai-shek had relocated to Taiwan in 1949, and continued through the 1950s, with perhaps as many as 45,000 executions.

compromised the very idea of a Left in Taiwan. The Left needed to be based on theories, while identity politics needed only to appeal to emotions. So the opposition movement in Taiwan shifted away from a Left that had been traumatized in its deep theoretical bases, to an ethnic agenda that was less fraught, which then evolved in the way we've talked about. Today it is an instrument of local power-politics. This is our major aversion. It is like a Pandora's box whose lid has been deliberately opened by politicians. The dying ethnic issue has surfaced again.

Hou: Taiwan is also not like Ireland for other reasons. Everyone shares the same religion here, but no-one strives for independence as eagerly as they've done there. Our politicians promote localization in a very crude way. They do not stick to the issue of independence and work towards it, either step by step or with a more radical approach. Their supporters only brandish rather simplistically such slogans as de-Sinicization. Actually we never believe that they can seriously carry out independence.

Hsia: Even most fundamentalists of Taiwan independence would admit that they do not plan to sacrifice their lives for this ideal. Indeed they insist it is a must to sleep soundly at home when engaged in a political movement. They say they can talk and act to maintain the movement in the daytime, but in the evening they have to go home and rest.

Hou: Much of the reason for the extent of their success lies in the resentment that the KMT dictatorship left behind. The elder generation of Minnan remember its repression and respond to the forces that once fought against it. That's understandable. But if you really pose them with the prospect of doing battle with the CCP to gain independence, not a single mother would be a taker. To be honest, nobody is willing to go to war.

*If there are so few cultural distinctions between the various communities on the island today, and a great deal of intermarriage and social mixing, what explains the very marked regional pattern of the vote in Taiwanese elections? The current one is more pronounced than ever. If one looks at the election map, it's not even a patchwork—the south is Green, and the north is Blue, virtually en bloc, with scattered enclaves of the opposite camp here and there. Normally, that kind of distribution reflects either an acute social polarization or distinct cultural identities. What explains it in this case? Another question would be this: if ethnic appeals sway mostly older people who suffered under the KMT dictatorship, why has the DPP scored best among the younger generation?*

CHU: Let me say something. From my own observation, I would very much confirm the belief that ethnic problems were not a big issue before. I myself am a typical example. My father came from the mainland in 1949. My mother is Hakka. So I could be labelled a 'second-generation mainlander'. But in my own experience, issues of identity—which community one belonged to—were not a significant problem until the last decade, when they started to be taken up for political ends. Since then, what was once make-believe has become reality. When Lee Teng-hui was in power, he wanted to drive those he had marginalized within the KMT out of power; these were mostly officials who had come from the mainland in 1949. For that purpose, he formed an alliance with the DPP, whose following was essentially Minnan, using the issue of ethnicity to appeal to the DPP, since he came from the same community. The main theme of his rule was that we Taiwanese should unite against mainlanders and eliminate the remaining influence of the foreign regime that descended on us from the other side of the straits. That slogan has now been declaimed for more than a decade, and has been very effective. Time and again it allowed the DPP to abandon completely its responsibilities as an opposition party in a democratic system, on the pretext that it could not risk threatening Lee Teng-hui's rule and restoring the mainlanders' power. This is our major dissatisfaction.

As for the graphic distinction between the north and the south, I take a different view of it. One often hears it said that historically the KMT valued the north above the south, because the capital was in the north, so they invested more in Taipei, while starving the agricultural counties in the south of resources. That would then explain why the north votes Blue, and the south Green. The reality, however, is that southern agricultural counties like Yunlin, Chiai and Tainan are forever faithful voters for whichever is the ruling party of the hour. They are neither Green nor Blue as such. In the election of 2000, Yunlin, Chiai and Tainan were solidly Blue—they all supported KMT, as a guaranteed bloc. This year they all voted Green. Have local beliefs changed? Not at all. They just vote for whoever is in power, in much the way that agricultural counties in Japan have almost always supported the LDP. In these areas, local people have limited access to information, and their educational level is low. In the cities, people can exchange information and ideas in many ways, via the internet, television, newspapers, magazines, or circles of friends, encouraging independence of thought. In agricultural counties, it is quite different. Most people cannot even understand Mandarin. Often their

sole channel of information is the powerful ruling party, through either the official broadcasting or leaflets distributed by local government offices in the villages. Thus they always tend to vote for the party in power. If you understand this, you won't be surprised why they can all turn Green or Blue overnight. If my explanation is correct, you will not be surprised to find that the Blue vote is not only in the north but in urbanized areas generally. In the middle zones of Taiwan, such as Taichung County and Taichung City, the Blue camp did slightly less well than predicted in opinion polls this time, but they went mainly Blue in previous local elections. The reason is simply that voters are—relatively speaking—capable of more independent judgement in semi-urbanized areas.

Moreover, in a cross-section analysis of party support in various opinion polls, probably everyone, including both the DPP and the KMT themselves, would acknowledge that the KMT's major strength lies among people in their thirties and forties. Its electorate is spindle-shaped, gradually decreasing towards the two ends of old age and youth. The level of education among Blue voters is relatively high, many having college degrees. This camp also enjoys more support among women. The polls show that most of the DPP's supporters tend to be older, people in their fifties and sixties, with less education. Generally speaking, if Taiwanese society wants to move forward, it would be reasonable to think that it should not depend so much on the too young or too old, the generations that point either to a future that is still some way off, or to a past that has now already receded.

**Hsia:** To some extent, I agree with Tien-hsin that 'Green south and Blue north' is a political construction of the past decade, or even the last five years. It was not like this before. Working in urban studies, I incline to believe that globalization has been the principal cause of this political distribution. In competition on the world market, Taiwan's best performance comes from the high-tech corridor between Taipei and Hsinchu. Our electronics industry is the most successful sector of our economy. It also invests more than any other in the mainland. So in a global setting, the most competitive region of the country is the north. The south used to be the centre of our heavy industry. But Taiwan can no longer sustain that kind of manufacturing. In the past, the productivity of the port of Kaohsiung ranked third in the world for its handling of cargo, after Hong Kong and Singapore. It continues to enjoy many natural advantages—freighters of any size or generation can dock there, unlike Shanghai, which is having to build new ports on the Yangshan Islands.

Nevertheless, Kaohsiung has now fallen far behind not only Hong Kong and Singapore, but is losing ground to Pusan and Shanghai. Why? One reason has certainly been political, the lack of any breakthrough in relations with the mainland. But more generally, a serious regional disparity has opened up with Taipei in global capitalist competition and the transition to a post-industrial economy. Politically, however, this uneven development has been displaced into identity politics, as if the regional distinction between the north and the south were essentially a question of ethnicity. This is really troubling.

Historically, the agricultural counties in Taiwan were all Blue. They were the firmest supporters of the KMT, whereas the stronghold of opposition to Chiang Kai-shek's regime—there was no DPP yet—was Taipei. That was so from the time of Kao Yu-shu, the first Taiwanese mayor of Taipei, when you could get killed for standing up to the KMT. People in the capital have long been the most open-minded, showing least trust in official propaganda. The first time Chen Shui-bian ran for an important position, he lost in his home county Tainan, which is rural. But when he ran for mayor in Taipei, he won. The city used to be the biggest supporter of the DPP, and it is extremely embarrassing for them that it has now swung against the party. Chen Shui-bian was originally very popular here. I too voted for him. But he has squandered this support. His rule as president alienated so many people in Taipei that the city has just voted heavily Blue. The DPP now claims that this is because the city is dominated by mainlanders, which is ridiculous. Pressed to explain what proportion of the inhabitants come from across the straits, they change tack and say the Minnan are so generous in character that they are willing to support mainlanders. Such ethnic explanations make no sense at all. The reality is as Tien-hsin describes it: the average level of education in Taipei is higher, women are more independent, and the citizenry is more modern in outlook.

CHU: Part of the reason for the DPP's popularity among the younger generation may be that this age group does not yet have to face the economic realities of having to support a family.

HOU: It's also because during Chen Shui-bian's tenure as Taipei mayor, and then as president, he mobilized youth culture—there were lots of mass dancing parties and celebrations held in front of City Hall, or the Presidential Palace, with a sea of 'Chen Shui-bian Caps'. The atmosphere

was carnivalesque, but also somewhat idol-worshipping. It was like a fan phenomenon. Taiwan's young people are easily attracted by that.

TANG: Previously the younger generations, including the middle cohorts in society, from twenty to fifty years old, used to be the main force supporting the DPP. The age group between thirty to fifty years old has gradually changed, mainly because of higher unemployment in recent years, and other economic problems. But the age group between twenty and thirty remains relatively unaffected. Some of the reasons have just been mentioned. They typically have no family to support and are not that concerned with economic pressures. But it also has to do with the leadership of the two political camps. Chen is much younger than either James Soong or Lien Chan, and consciously plays the card of his age.<sup>4</sup> Compared with them, he is naturally more attractive to young people. But when he competes with Ma Ying-jeou, the current KMT mayor in Taipei, who defeated him for the post in 1998, he does not have the same advantage. It's also true that Chen Shui-bian has put a lot of effort into wooing students and youth, including the holding of various festivities. The officials in his administration are generally quite young too. Moreover, student years are always a time of rebellion, and the DPP has reflected that spirit. It is a party that is radical in style and conduct, built on enthusiasm, that tends to break with the rules, be they moral norms or legal codes, of the establishment. It is quite an aggressive organization. The famous student movement of the early nineties, the years of the DPP's initial growth, naturally joined forces with the party. Interestingly enough, the first generation of the student movement, people now in their thirties, are among those who most frequently reject Chen Shui-bian today, because this is where unemployment is concentrated. But in the universities themselves, those remaining on campus have retained their earliest revolutionary fervour unfaded. Although the DPP competes within a democratic framework, it has always relied on something like a revolutionary dynamic in this sense. Even when it takes over power, it does not stop there, but aims at a target over the horizon, namely to found a nation—a Taiwan Republic, with its own independent constitution. So it stands for a kind of continual revolution. That too gives it a strong appeal to the younger generation, especially among university students.

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<sup>4</sup> James Soong, former secretary to Chiang Ching-kuo, who was the KMT's provincial governor of the island in the nineties, and now heads the People First Party, for which he ran as vice-presidential candidate on the Blue ticket in 2004. Lien Chan, former KMT premier under Lee Teng-hui in the nineties, and the party's presidential candidate in 2004.

*Why do the Hakka communities in Taiwan vote solidly Blue?*

TANG: They don't—rather, they vote solidly against Chen.

CHU: Exactly: it's the other way around. They refuse to vote Green.

HOU: Their situation is like this. I'm a Hakka myself, but I was brought to Taiwan by my family in 1947 right after I was born. Basically I am what they call 'mainland Hakka'. When I was a boy, I refused to admit this because my schoolmates all said that Hakkas were mean and stingy. Such stereotypes were very strong. Therefore I absolutely would not admit that I was a Hakka in my childhood. Later, I found that Hakkas tended to live in highland areas of agricultural counties, in self-contained groups with a very strong sense of clan self-protection. They were conservative in their ways, and had long been on bad terms with the much more numerous Minnan. Since they had so often been attacked or threatened in the past, going right back to the seventeenth century, Hakkas were reluctant to marry Minnan, or into any other ethnic group. Their rate of inter-marriage was always low. So after the KMT arrived from the mainland, maybe they looked to the Blue camp as some sort of shield.

CHU: Let me add something. Because my mother is Hakka, most of my relatives are Hakkas. I believe we should say that they have received neither preferential treatment nor special humiliation or oppression from the KMT, so their attitude towards the KMT is to stay at a respectful distance from it. But they are scared by Minnan and dislike them very much, because historically there were so many violent conflicts fought between these two ethnic groups. We have a saying that Zhangzhou people and Quanzhou people came to Taiwan one after another. Then there were Minnan and Hakka. Many died in the fights between them. So they have been enemies for ages. Tang Nuo is right to point out that Hakkas fear the Green rather than trust the Blue. The Green's ethnic base is the Minnan population who make up about 70 per cent of Taiwan's total population, and they have shown some increasingly exclusivist tendencies in recent years. They talk continuously about the Taiwanese people or the Taiwanese language, but these usages do not include the Hakka. They are referring only to the Minnan. That's why some Hakkas would reply, 'the state you want to establish is yours—we didn't say we wanted to found a state: have you ever listened to us? If in your Republic of Taiwan, it is only the Minnan who are going to rule and become masters

of the country, then what's the difference from the mainlanders ruling us, as it used to be? We are still the same, the ruled. Therefore we are not at all interested in your nation-building project.' I think this is their basic attitude.

*You have all been talking about the DPP's manipulation of identity politics. But if someone says to you—yes, we must do everything to fight the stoking-up of ethnic tensions in Taiwan, but we should also try to move ahead together towards an independent Taiwanese state, in which there is ethnic equality, would you agree to that?*

Hou: Yes, we certainly agree.

TANG: No, we will be extremely alarmed.

CHU: Exactly.

HSIA: Isn't this hypothetical?

TANG: We have historical lessons in this respect. Our experience in Taiwan is that when the ruling party—whichever one—starts to raise this issue, it usually wants to shift people's attention from more urgent substantial problems. Personally, I am Minnan and I don't reject the idea that Taiwan should be able to exercise various options. But I have always been sensitive to the sound of official nationalism. When you hear that voice, it is usually telling you how much you need to sacrifice for the nation. We are alert to this. In recent years, the voice of independence has become quite loud. But the essential character of Taiwan is, after all, that it is an immigrant society. It has been unwilling to face the real problem of independence seriously, namely its price. For everyone knows, that if the two sides of the Taiwan Strait were to go to war, it would be extremely high. On the whole, people here have tended to avoid thinking about this question. But if it were really posed, I don't know whether Taiwanese society, with its strong immigrant character, would still insist on independence. Nationalism should be handled extremely carefully in Taiwan, because it faces an inevitable opponent, which is the nationalism of 1.2 billion people a short distance away. I am highly skeptical whether Taiwan should move in such a dangerous direction.

CHU: I think one should adapt a slogan of the CCP's to the DPP: listen to what they say, and watch what they do. Take this election as an example. One day before the vote, the DPP told the country, over and over again, from Chen's speech to the last campaign leaflet, that if you didn't vote for them but for the Blues, you would be a fellow-traveller of mainland Communism, and effectively belong to another country. Yet after making this kind of claim, the next day people would be advised to go back to their normal life. I cannot be convinced by this. So I've spent a long time watching whether you mean what you say. Whose nation is it you are talking about? This is very important. I don't care whether it calls itself the Republic of Taiwan, or whatever. I want to know whose country it is. If it's going to be a country defined by a certain person or a certain ethnic group alone, with no space for me, then no matter what it is called, I cannot accept it. I can give you a very small example. Yesterday, I ran into a student who is studying my work in the Taiwanese department of Cheng Kung University. When she told her supervisor this, he upbraided her until she wept, telling her she should change her research topic. I asked her why. She said: 'he told me, how could you study a second-generation mainland writer?' I asked her who her supervisor was. It turns out he was Lin Rui-ming, who is not just a professor in Cheng Kung University, but the director of the National Literary Museum, which is the highest independent unit in the field outside the Ministry of Culture, working with all writers, collecting relics or holding events. This is an official figure, who can tell his student straightforwardly not to study my work because I am a so-called second-generation mainlander. How could this kind of Taiwan Republic be meaningful to me?

HOU: When I answered your question, I said 'Yes'. What did I mean? I wasn't thinking of the current situation, but imagining the position Taiwan might occupy, if it overcame its internal problems, in the Chinese-speaking communities around the world. Also: what kind of role would it want to play in Asia? These two questions are, in my view, the most important for Taiwan's future direction. At the moment, I agree with Tang Nuo and Tien-hsin that we face a problem of mentality—an incomprehensible narrow-mindedness of the sort Tien-hsin has just described. But if we try to imagine a better future, I would say that if a Taiwanese government could truly resolve all ethnic questions, reconciling Fujianese, Hakka, mainland, aboriginal Taiwanese and the new immigrants, through real equality and inter-marriage, then it would no doubt be capable of handling the question of Taiwan's position in the Chinese-speaking world.

and Taiwan's role in Asia. Of course, such a notion remains an ideal. In present conditions, we are very far from that.

**Hsia:** I am on the Left, but I wouldn't emphasize this issue. For a long time, one of the principles distinguishing Left and Right has been their attitude to the nation-state. The Right typically aims at founding one, while the Left has rarely put its energy into that. How and why a national identity is constructed are issues worth serious attention. They are not to be casually dismissed. In Taiwan, we need sympathetic analysis of the historical and political causes of the emergence of its modern nationalism. But we also need to remember how often, in the history of developing countries, building a nation-state has come to a bad end. If there were no more ethnic conflicts inside Taiwan, what I would look forward to is a tomorrow in which we can go beyond the idea of nation-state, towards a cross-border world. I know that we still need a state to regulate, to protect, to construct. But does it have to be based on a nation? I would rather like to imagine a closer relation among Chinese-speaking cities, a kind of intercity networking in East Asia. I'd prefer to explore such new institutional possibilities. After all, they are trying to invent a new system in Europe. They didn't want to reproduce a nation-state, so now they have a European Union, which is not a super-state like the US, where there is a federal structure but basically the country is just a mega-nation-state. If we really want to think about the future, I'd rather we imagined one along these lines, instead of following a brilliant leader to create a new nation. I know it is difficult, but the price of trying to create another nation-state here would be too high—half the population would not approve it. How should we deal with a society traumatized by such a deep division?

**Chu:** There could be a civil war.

**Tang:** We more or less regard ourselves as intellectuals. The role of an intellectual is to oppose governments and criticize authority. As for the nation or the state, I often think of Graham Greene's words in *Our Man in Havana*: 'I wouldn't kill for my country. I wouldn't kill for capitalism or Communism or social democracy or the welfare state—whose welfare? I would kill Carter because he killed Hasselbacher . . . If I love or if I hate, let me love or hate as an individual. I will not be 59200/5 in anyone's global war.' So 'country' has no appeal for me. We need a wider horizon and a more universal idea than the empty concept of a nation,

or something that is more substantial and closer to our sensibilities and our lives as actual individuals than anything that some latter-day version of Rousseau's civil religion could offer.

*How would you describe the general situation of the arts in Taiwan today? In the mainland, cultural activities are subject to censorship by officialdom. Clearly nothing like this exists in Taiwan. Would it be right to think that the different arts can flourish here without any political controls or inspections?*

TANG: No, that would be misleading. There is no censorship as such, but recent years have seen an unofficial tendency towards a kind of selection, driven by the politically correct slogans of localization and de-Sinicization. This has become a very serious pressure, especially in academic and literary life, where it is now more acute than official censorship might be. In Taiwan's universities, dissertations, funds and promotions are all controlled by the ruling party. A recent survey reported that some 80–90 per cent of doctoral and master's theses in the humanities and social sciences now concentrate on the study of Taiwan. The result is that the atmosphere has become quite tense in academic institutions, more so than in society at large. The DPP has now been in power for four years, and has put a lot of effort into bringing this area of life under its influence. Relatively speaking, the KMT was more tolerant towards culture, not because it had advanced ideas, but because it was incapable of recognizing cultural issues—it had no understanding of culture whatsoever, and no policy towards it. In such circumstances, there was actually more space for scholars and artists. The DPP, on the other hand, had very definite ideas about culture from the beginning, related to its particular attachment to the myths of nation-building, and so has been much more inclined to interfere, as if intellectual and artistic life were a battlefield. This attitude is not unique to Taiwan, of course. Nationalism is a variant of Rousseau's civil religion. As a religion, it does not encourage you to think. It only asks you to believe. It is essentially the opposite of the principle of literature and the arts.

*What about the cinema?*

Hou: The situation is miserable. It's not a question of censorship. Mainland films are not banned in Taiwan, but people don't go to see them. They don't even see Taiwanese films. Nowadays they only watch Hollywood movies. Taiwan produces just a dozen or so films each year,

and most of them depend on official funding. There are perhaps only three exceptions—Yang Te-chang [Edward Yang], Tsai Ming-liang and myself—who can get financing in France or Japan.<sup>5</sup> So the problem is one of resources. In recent years, official funding has been controlled by a group of people, whose banner is localization. These people are very narrow-minded. They lack any talent or cinematic ability themselves, but want to impose a kind of political correctness, and look for directors to make films that will illustrate it. But they don't know how to find them. So they've only made a few soap operas, on which they've spent a lot of money. But they are very concerned to exercise control, and if they can't shape software—the script or *mise en scène* of a film—they try to make up for it with hardware, by supplying or denying financial support for post-production. Control of resources matters there. I've never had any problems myself, since I'm not dependent on this circuit. The only time I encountered any problem was when I made *Flowers of Shanghai*, and I was reproached for shooting a film with a mainland setting.<sup>6</sup> The government has no competence in cultural questions. The official unit in charge of the film industry is hopeless. No matter how often you talk to them, they pay no attention.

In literature, their people are similarly incompetent, unable to compete with real writers. But the government takes care to put various awards and prizes under its control. Real creative artists do not care about these at all. But there are constant examples of official meddling in the arts. When there is a project in the national theatre and a performing troop has to be found, they tend to look for obedient people to stage the play, and the outcome is usually poor. People seldom go to see these productions. Another recent example is the way a list of writers invited to France was altered by the government. The DPP eliminated authors it didn't like and added authors it approved of. Tien-hsin's sister, Chu Tien-wen, was crossed off the list.<sup>7</sup> The French were infuriated. They said, we don't want the names you've supplied, we want those whom we invited. Eventually, the government had to back down and Tien-wen was allowed to go. That was for China's cultural year in France.

<sup>5</sup> See 'The Frustrated Architect' and 'Taiwan Stories', NLR 11, Sept–Oct 2001.

<sup>6</sup> *Flowers of Shanghai* (1998): based on an 1894 novel by Han Bangqing, set in a traditional bordello of the city in the late nineteenth century.

<sup>7</sup> Chu Tien-wen: well-known Taiwanese writer and collaborator with Hou, author of the script for *A City of Sadness* and other films.

**Hsia:** I am the convenor of the architectural group for this year's National Arts Awards, which is a new category that will start giving awards in 2004. There will also be new awards for the cinema. It is generally acknowledged that Taiwanese cinema has much greater achievements to its credit than our architecture. We have already decided, in fact, to leave this year's award blank. So far there isn't any good architecture in Taiwan. We need to make further efforts.

**Chu:** Today, if you apply for a position in the Chinese department of a university when someone has died or retired or taken sick leave, they will tell you the post is not being renewed. No more faculties are being added or even replaced. But if you apply for a job in departments of Taiwanese studies, Taiwanese language or Taiwanese literature, things are different. Traditionally, to set up an institute or department in Taiwan, there are certain threshold requirements, concerning syllabuses, teachers, funds and so forth. But now, if you want to establish a Taiwanese institute or department, you get immediate approval once you submit your budget. The atmosphere is such, some teachers in Chinese departments are saying that after another couple of years maybe we will be shunted into the foreign language department. The situation is similar in the schools, where pupils are under a lot of examination pressure, as in other East Asian countries, and their scores can now depend on giving the politically correct answers to questions like: what country do you belong to? I know this from my own daughter, who likes Chinese literature and told me she would rather give up high marks than be forced to say what is expected of her. But there wouldn't be many children like her. For good scores, you have to be Taiwanese. So in your school days, you internalize those ideas in your formative years.

*You've spoken of the dangers of a divisive 'Taiwanization'—in effect, Minnanization—of education, culture and the civil service. But wouldn't Green supporters say: This is just correcting the many years of discrimination against Minnan by the KMT regime, when Mandarin was forcibly imposed on us. We are being more tolerant to Mandarin speakers than they ever were to us.' What's your view of this sort of argument, and more generally of the language and educational policies of the KMT when it was in power?*

**Tang:** This is the worst excuse of the DPP and could become an obstacle to further social progress in Taiwan in the future. What do I mean by this? To be progressive is continuously to upgrade our criteria of

performance; it is to feel that what could once be done has now become unacceptable. We often say that politics has always been the weakest link in the chain of Taiwanese development, where progress has tended to break down. For a long time, we've seen a race between society and politics in Taiwan. When society took the lead, it could improve everything else, including even politics, as happened in the period around the lifting of martial law in the late eighties. When politics took the lead, social development would be dragged backward, as has happened over the issue of ethnic tensions.

Viewed from this perspective, the DPP is in some ways more worrisome than the KMT. For the corruption of the KMT was relatively confined within the 'political' sphere in a more restricted sense. The party did not concern itself overmuch with the economic, cultural or educational spheres. The DPP, however, wants to meddle in all these realms to serve its political ends. For example, it handles the issue of cross-straits trade from a single-mindedly party-political position. Similarly, it has raided or sued newspaper offices, bought up news media firms with public funds or money from private conglomerates, injected its political ideology into educational reform and textbook revision and so forth. The KMT committed similar mistakes before, but on a lesser scale and without the same extent of social damage. Since the DPP came to power, many people have become anxious—not just about their economic situation, but about the withering away of social life in general. Politics is getting the upper hand over the whole society. More than any particular phenomena, it is this trend that is the gravest cause for concern today.

CHU: When the DPP says: 'if the KMT could do this before, why couldn't we do the same now?', it reminds us that to observe a political party, it is not enough to look at its performance in opposition, we must also see how it uses its power after coming to office. If we do that, we can only conclude that the DPP is in practice not that different from the KMT. This ought to be a disappointment to many intellectuals and ordinary citizens who have long supported the DPP and had high expectations of it. Yet I believe this may not be an unhealthy way to view the situation. Both Blue and Green camps then lose their mystic haloes, and therewith certain burdens as well; they fall back to the earth of normal competition between parties in a constitutional democracy, in which neither is any more sacred nor more evil than the other. Seen in that light, this is not a bad development at all.

Hou: Taiwan has a folk saying: 'As soon as you get over a cough, you get asthma'. If the DPP is itself willing to be asthmatic, that is its own degeneration. Or to put it more crudely, if other people are dung beetles, and you want to be such beetles too, what choice is there for us but to get rid of you?

Hsia: We shouldn't reproduce the discrimination and ideology of the KMT regime. We need change, to change ourselves—this is the social transformation we expect. Otherwise, we would just reproduce the same logic as before. Isn't that the lesson of Lao She's *Tea House*?<sup>8</sup>

*How do you envisage the future activities of the Alliance?*

Tang: Before the presidential election, we had just one aim: to prevent further fanning of ethnic tensions during the campaign. Our original intention was that, if either of the two sides, Blue or Green, manipulated issues of ethnicity, we would stand up and stop them. With that immediate urgency prior to the election, when the whole society was charged with high tension, it was not easy to talk about long-term plans or theoretical constructions. Now that the election is over, we can develop a set of projects more gradually. We have some immediate plans to promote legislation against ethnic discrimination—in other words, a bill of equal rights. We will also press for commissions to be set up to establish the historical truth about our past, including the February 28 Incident and the White Terror, so that people don't have just to guess what happened, as they do now. We want to see the archives properly opened to the public, under professional guidelines set by the historical profession and by law. We incorporated this demand in our inaugural manifesto. Another issue that we insist needs to be faced is the situation of new immigrants in Taiwan today. Many of these are 'brides' from the mainland, or from Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam. They usually live in the countryside in Taiwan. The babies of these brides now account for one out of eight of Taiwan's newborn population. If discrimination against them persists, this will very soon become a big social problem. There are also, of course, the long-standing difficulties suffered by the aboriginal peoples of our island.

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<sup>8</sup> Three-act play (1957) by Lao She, set in Qing, Republican and immediate post-war China, in which the same repressive roles are reproduced from one period and generation to the next.

Our initial intention was to extract some promises of restraint from the two camps while our voice could still be heard during the election. Many of us had been active in various particular fields—cultural activities or social movements. Some were engaged in working with aboriginal Taiwanese, others with foreign labourers and immigrants; still others in women's movements. This time we came together because of the nature of the Alliance. Though we have had limited success so far, the experience has been very positive, since we have realized that when we are united we become more imaginative and more effective.

CHU: I would put it this way. Whereas social movements primarily face towards the people, or the public, the Alliance faces towards power-holders and political parties. Social movements agitate and educate. Our role will be to check and criticize. That doesn't mean we don't care about people. Actually we are all active in our own fields, working towards people's positions. For example, Hou Hsiao-Hsien faces his audience, Tang Nuo and I towards our readers, Hsia his students, and social activists their public. I believe the job of the Alliance is to face the authorities, and speak with a critical voice to them.

Hou: Each of our members has long been active in their own field. In the cinema, aside from making my own films, I've also set up an association to organize different events. When I became more familiar with fellow members of the Alliance, I noticed that some of them had been working to help those with work-related injuries, others with aborigines, others with foreign labourers. Their cases—like such historical events in Taiwan as the February 28 Incident and the White Terror, about which as producer I made two documentaries—reminded me that filmmakers could provide certain resources to collaborate with them. For example, we can make television documentaries, an hour or an hour and a half each time. These activists have a rich experience in their own areas of work, but the social movements they represent have a very hard time becoming visible in the media. It is extremely difficult for them to reach the public. The media do not care about them at all. So if we can make visual images of what they are doing, we may be able to empower them. We've discussed this, and will organize a team to work on such projects. In that sense, as well as criticizing the authorities, our Alliance also wants to do something to increase communication between different ethnic and disadvantaged groups, to help them understand each other.

better, so we can see what the opportunities are for change. Even if they seem dim, we still need to try.

TANG: We also have to be able to speak honestly about nationalism. Taiwan has little experience of the scale of disaster that ethnic conflicts can bring. In principle, as a late-developing society, Taiwan could draw on the experience of Europe, of Central Asia and Southeast Asia. But there are two ways of learning. One is by acquiring historical knowledge, so that we can turn other people's experience to our own benefit, and not pay so high a price for it. The other is to learn by one's own suffering. Europe had to endure two world wars before it understood that there are things human beings should never do to each other. In Taiwan, we don't know which of these two ways of learning will prevail. We don't know if we can convince our next generation by using examples and words. We don't know if only disaster and pain can awaken them. There is currently a race in Taiwan between these possibilities: learning by knowledge or by calamity. We hope we can convince people, so that the society does not have to pay that price. But frankly, we don't have any assurance at all. For today's Taiwan is very indifferent towards other people's experience. Besides, when any nationalism emerges, it usually defines itself as unlike anything else—other people's experience is not the same as ours, we have our own national conditions, and our own unique path. Other experiences are irrelevant. But if we look around us, we can see that Taiwan is not that unique. Much that has happened and is still happening here was lived through by others elsewhere. This is why we are so worried about the rise of an anti-intellectual, populist nationalism in this island, and have a duty to warn of the dangers it ignores, in rejecting so much of the real experience of human history and the opportunity to avoid repeating its disasters.

*This is a question for Hou Hsiao-Hsien. You are world-famous as the director of a trilogy of films about the history of Taiwan: The Puppet Master on the era of Japanese colonial rule; A City of Sadness on the February 28 Incident; Good Men, Good Women on the period of the White Terror. Do you have any plans to make films on later periods of your history, episodes or themes after the 1950s?*

Hou: I think that should be done by younger generations. The trilogy of films I made was closer to the background of my own age-group. They were concerned with experiences that shaped the lives of the generations

just before mine. It was like shooting part of my own experience. I always wonder, why don't the directors who are ten or twenty years younger than I am record what was happening just before they grew up? We cannot record those experiences for them. The story of the opposition movement against the KMT dictatorship, the *Formosa* Incident—all that should be re-imagined by their generation rather than mine. Personally, after the films I made on Japanese occupation, the February 28 Incident, and the White Terror, which were based on what we heard from the elder generation and could learn from literature, I don't feel the strength to repeat this. Perhaps it is a matter of distance in time. I have moved to another stage in my own creative work, and it's difficult to go back to an earlier one. But I think some of those themes remain highly suitable for television films. My films on those topics were by no means comprehensive. There are lots of historical episodes and figures missing from them. Chen Ying-chen of the Jen Chian (Human Realm) Study Society, is trying to use images and films to present some of this history, and I've had discussions with them. There are lots of themes to work on. I will probably supervise and produce some films for them—organize a team, or let them organize a team, for this purpose. They've already started. They came to me for help, to provide equipment and negatives, because I have more resources. I've started to assist them.

*Edward Yang told us a couple of years ago that he thought it would be impossible for him to make a film about ethnic tensions, for example between Fujianese and former mainlanders, in Taiwan. Would you also say that such contemporary social realities can't be represented on the screen today?*

Hou: No, I think it's possible to make a film of this kind. The important thing would be to have enough cultural preparation, to have the right sense of the subject. I am now starting to make films entirely focussed on contemporary themes. Since *Flowers of Shanghai*, I have been returning to modern times, and thinking about the difficulties of representing them. Films cannot treat these as exhaustively as television or newspaper reports. So I have been wrestling with the problem of what angles or forms to adopt for them in the cinema. I don't think my ideas are very finely tuned yet, but I do feel that political issues always penetrate into daily life, and that to present that life from within would be the best way of tackling the issues you mention. Now that I have joined the Alliance, I might get some ideas from it that would move me in that direction. It is hard to say.

*A final question about your current movies. There is one clear continuity between your earlier films and your latest ones, which is your interest in the situation of young people. But how would you describe the differences between the worlds conjured up in The Boys from Feng kuei (1982) and in Millennium Mambo (2002)? Obviously, there are spatial and temporal distances—the former is about youngsters from the offshore islands when Taiwan was still a predominantly small-town and rural society, while the latter depicts metropolitan life in the new century. But what are the existential contrasts in these two epochs and settings for young people themselves, in your eyes?*

Hou: Let me answer that by saying something about my new film *Coffee Time*, which was shot in Japan. In one sense, it is a purely Japanese story, which I made in homage to Yasujiro Ozu on the centenary of his birth. Ozu made films on family themes, for example the predicaments of a father in marrying off a daughter. In Tokyo today, these daughters have now entered into a new state of being, identical to that of many of their contemporaries in Taiwan. So I adapted phenomena in Taiwan with which I'm familiar. We have many single mothers, about 300,000 according to official statistics. Typically, such a young mother is about thirty. She becomes pregnant accidentally with a boyfriend. She decides to have the child, but does not tell her partner. She is not going to marry him either. She wants to bring the baby up all by herself. She thinks that love is too tiring, relations between men and women have become too exhausting. Besides, she has learnt from her own family experience that she could be more devoted to her child if she doesn't have to waste time solving conflicts with a husband. I borrowed this phenomenon from Taiwan and filmed it in Japan. In the movie, the girl's boyfriend is Taiwanese. I based him on the experience of a schoolmate of my own daughter. She went to university in the US, where many of her classmates came from families that ran small or middle-sized firms in Taiwan and then emigrated to Thailand, because production costs were lower there. So their children had their elementary and secondary education in Thailand. Then they went to university in the US, studying subjects related to their family business. For example, if the family made tyres or leather, the child would study chemistry; if the family made umbrellas, the child would study management. Anyway, they studied whatever their parents wanted them to. They have all graduated now, and they are all working in their father's family factory. Nowadays those factories have moved from Thailand to mainland China, or Hong Kong. My daughter had many such schoolmates.

This interested me very much. So I combined this background with Taiwan's single mother pattern in my film and moved the story to Japan. Perhaps in the future young people will not be so fixed in a given place as they used to be. They may have some experience of mainland China, of Hong Kong, or of other cities in Asia. Or they may have studied in the US or Europe. This is very common in Taiwan. Often their experience of other countries is far more than that of the island itself. Their time in Taiwan may be quite limited. Many of my daughter's schoolmates went abroad while in middle school, and the earlier they go abroad, the harder it is for them to come back to Taiwan, because they are not used to its ways. Those who go abroad after graduating from high school are more acclimatized to Taiwan; those who leave after university still more so. There are now also many young Taiwanese who go to universities in the mainland. For example, the son of one of my schoolmates who is also a film director, Hsu Hsiao-ming, went to Beijing after studying at the National Taiwan University for one year. He didn't like the experience and insisted on studying in Beijing. Nowadays, young people share information, as well as much the same experience and memories, everywhere. Regional differences have faded. They listen to the same music. For them, unlike our generation, everything is similar. Their world has changed. I always say, why can't the DPP leave the possibility of nation-building, or many other options, to our next generation? How do you know what they are capable of? You should just mind your own business and leave resources to them. Perhaps their way of handling things will be far simpler than you imagine.

*Taipei, 23 March 2004*

FRANCO MORETTI

## GRAPHS, MAPS, TREES

### *Abstract Models for Literary History—3*

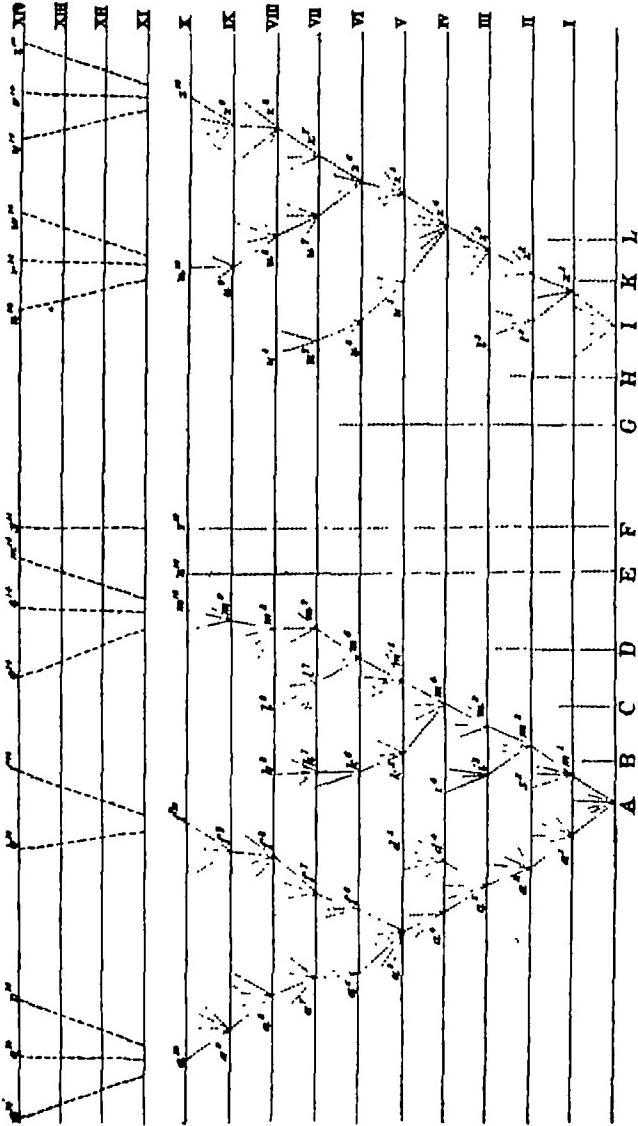
THESES; EVOLUTIONARY THEORY. They come last, in this series of essays, but were really the beginning, as my Marxist formation, influenced by DellaVolpe and his school, entailed a great respect (in principle, at least) for the methods of the natural sciences.<sup>1</sup> So, at some point I began to study evolutionary theory, and eventually realized that it opened a unique perspective on that key issue of literary study which is the interplay between history and form. Theories of form are usually blind to history, and historical work blind to form; but in evolution, morphology and history are really the two sides of the same coin. Or perhaps, one should say, they are the two dimensions of the same tree.

#### I

Figure 1 (overleaf) reproduces the only tree—‘an odd looking affair, but indispensable’, as Darwin writes to his publisher in the spring of 1859<sup>2</sup>—in *The Origin of Species*; it appears in the fourth chapter, ‘Natural selection’ (which in later editions becomes ‘Natural selection; or, the survival of the fittest’), in the section on ‘Divergence of character’. But when the image is first introduced, Darwin does not call it a ‘tree’: <sup>3</sup>

Now let us see how this principle of great benefit being derived from divergence of character, combined with the principles of natural selection and of extinction, will tend to act. The accompanying diagram will aid us in understanding this rather perplexing subject...<sup>4</sup>

FIGURE I: *Divergence of character*



Let  $\alpha$  be a common, widely-diffused, and varying species, belonging to a genus large in its own country. The little fan of diverging dotted lines of unequal lengths proceeding from  $\alpha$  may represent its varying offspring... Only those variations which are in some way profitable will be preserved or naturally selected. And here the importance of the principle of benefit being derived from divergence of character comes in; for this will generally lead to the most different or divergent variations (represented by the outer dotted lines) being preserved and accumulated by natural selection.

Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*

A diagram. After the diachronic diagrams of the first article, and the spatial ones of the second, trees are a way of constructing *morphological* diagrams, with form and history as the two variables of the analysis: the vertical axis of figure 1 charting the regular passage of time (every interval, writes Darwin, 'one thousand generations'), and the horizontal axis following the formal diversification ('the little fans of diverging dotted lines') that would eventually lead to 'well-marked varieties', or to entirely new species.

The horizontal axis follows formal diversification . . . But Darwin's words are stronger: he speaks of 'this rather perplexing subject'—elsewhere, 'perplexing & unintelligible'—whereby forms don't just 'change', but change by always *diverging* from each other (remember, we are in the section on 'Divergence of Character').<sup>6</sup> Whether as a result of historical

<sup>1</sup> The first two essays in this series, on 'Graphs' and 'Maps', appeared respectively in NLR 24, November–December 2003 and NLR 26, March–April 2004.

<sup>2</sup> 'It is an odd looking affair, but is *indispensable*', continues the letter to John Murray of May 31, 1859, 'to show the nature of the very complex affinities of past & present animals'. Frederick Burkhardt and Sydney Smith, eds, *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, vol. VII (1858–59), Cambridge 1991, p. 300.

<sup>3</sup> The word 'tree' appears only at the end of the chapter, and surrounded by signs of hesitation, possibly because of the religious echoes associated with the Tree of Life: 'The affinities of all the beings of the same class have *sometimes* been represented by a great tree. I *believe* this simile *largely* speaks the truth': Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, 1859; facsimile of the first edition, Cambridge, MA 2001, p. 129 (italics mine).

<sup>4</sup> Darwin, *Origin*, p. 116.

<sup>5</sup> 'You will find Ch. IV perplexing & unintelligible', he writes to Lyell on September 2, 1859, 'without the aid of enclosed queer Diagram, of which I send old & useless proof': Burkhardt and Smith, eds, *Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, p. 329.

<sup>6</sup> 'The intent of Darwin's famous diagram has almost always been misunderstood', writes Stephen Jay Gould: 'Darwin did not draw this unique diagram simply to illustrate the generality of evolutionary branching, but primarily to explicate the principle of divergence. Darwin's solution . . . holds that natural selection will generally favor the most extreme, the most different, the most divergent forms in a spectrum of variation emanating from any common parental stock . . . Note how only two species of the original array (A–L) ultimately leave descendants—the left extreme A and the near right extreme L. Note how each diversifying species first generates an upward fan of variants about its modal form, and how only the peripheral populations of the fan survive to diversify further. Note that the total morphospace (horizontal axis) expands by divergence, although only two of the original species leave descendants.' Stephen Jay Gould, *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory*, Cambridge, MA 2002, pp. 228–9, 235–6.

accidents, then, or under the action of a specific 'principle',<sup>7</sup> the reality of divergence pervades the history of life, defining its morphospace—its space-of-forms: an important concept, in the pages that follow—as an intrinsically expanding one.

From a single common origin, to an immense variety of solutions: it is this incessant growing-apart of life forms that the branches of a morphological tree capture with such intuitive force. 'A tree can be viewed as a simplified description of a matrix of distances', write Cavalli-Sforza, Menozzi and Piazza in the methodological prelude to their *History and Geography of Human Genes*; and figure 2, with its mirror-like alignment of genetic groups and linguistic families drifting away from each other (in a 'correspondence [that] is remarkably high but not perfect', as they note with aristocratic aplomb),<sup>8</sup> makes clear what they mean: a tree is a way of sketching *how far* a certain language has moved from another one, or from their common point of origin.

And if language evolves by diverging, why not literature too?

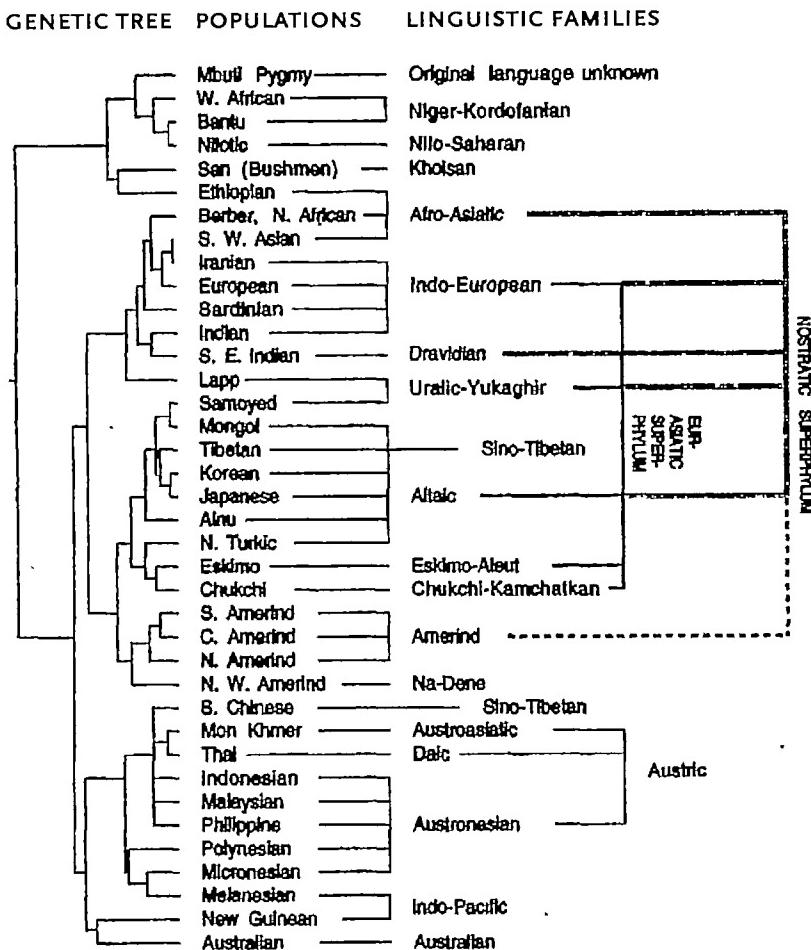
## II

For Darwin, 'divergence of character' interacts throughout history with 'natural selection and extinction': as variations grow apart from each other, selection intervenes, allowing only a few to survive. In a seminar of a few years ago, I addressed the analogous problem of literary survival, using as a test case the early stages of British detective fiction. We chose clues as the trait whose transformations were likely to be most revealing for the history of the genre, and proceeded to chart the relationships

<sup>7</sup> 'One might say . . . that "divergence of character" requires no separate principle beyond adaptation, natural selection, and historical contingency . . . Climates alter; topography changes; populations become isolated, and some, adapting to modified environments, form new species. What more do we need? . . . But Darwin grew dissatisfied with a theory that featured a general principle to explain adaptation, but then relied upon historical accidents of changing environments to resolve diversity. He decided that a fully adequate theory of evolution required an equally strong principle of diversity, one that acted intrinsically and predictably': Gould, *Structure*, p. 226.

<sup>8</sup> Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza, Paolo Menozzi and Alberto Piazza, *The History and Geography of Human Genes*, Princeton 1994, pp. 38, 99 (italics mine).

FIGURE 2: Linguistic trees



Why is there a close similarity between linguistic and genetic trees? The correlation is certainly not due to the effect of genes on languages; if anything, it is likely that there is a reverse influence, in that linguistic barriers may strengthen the genetic isolation between groups speaking different languages. . . The explanation of the parallelism between genetic and linguistic trees is to be sought in the common effect of events determining the separation of two groups. After fission and migration of one or both moieties to a different area, they are partially or completely isolated from each other. Reciprocal isolation causes both genetic and linguistic differentiation.

L. Luca Cavalli-Sforza, Paolo Menozzi and Alberto Piazza,  
*The History and Geography of Human Genes*

**Fig 2.6.2** The genetic tree comparing linguistic families and superfamilies published in Cavalli-Sforza et al (1988). Populations pooled on the basis of linguistic classifications belong to the following groups: Bantu, Niger-Kordofanian family, Nilotic, Nil-Saharan family, Southeast Indian, Dravidian family, Samoyeds, Uralic family from Russia, North Turkic, branch of Altaic family, Northwest Amerind, Na-Dene family. The genetic tree was constructed by average linkage analysis of Nei's genetic distances and is the same as that of figure 2.3 2A.

between Conan Doyle and some of his contemporaries as a series of branchings, which added up to the (modest) tree of figure 3.<sup>9</sup>

Here, from the very first branching at the bottom of the tree (whether clues were present or not) two things were immediately clear: the ‘formal’ fact that several of Doyle’s rivals (those on the left) did not use clues—and the ‘historical’ fact that they were all forgotten. It is a good illustration of what the literary market is like: ruthless competition—hinging on form. Readers discover that they like a certain device, and if a story doesn’t seem to include it, they simply don’t read it (and the story becomes extinct). This pressure of cultural selection probably explains the second branching of the tree, where clues *are* present, but serve no real function: as in ‘Race with the Sun’, for instance, where a clue reveals to the hero that the drug is in the third cup of coffee, and then, when he is offered the third cup, he actually *drinks it*. Which is indeed ‘perplexing & unintelligible’, and the only possible explanation is that these writers realized that clues were popular, and tried to smuggle them into their stories—but hadn’t really understood *how* clues worked, and so didn’t use them very well.

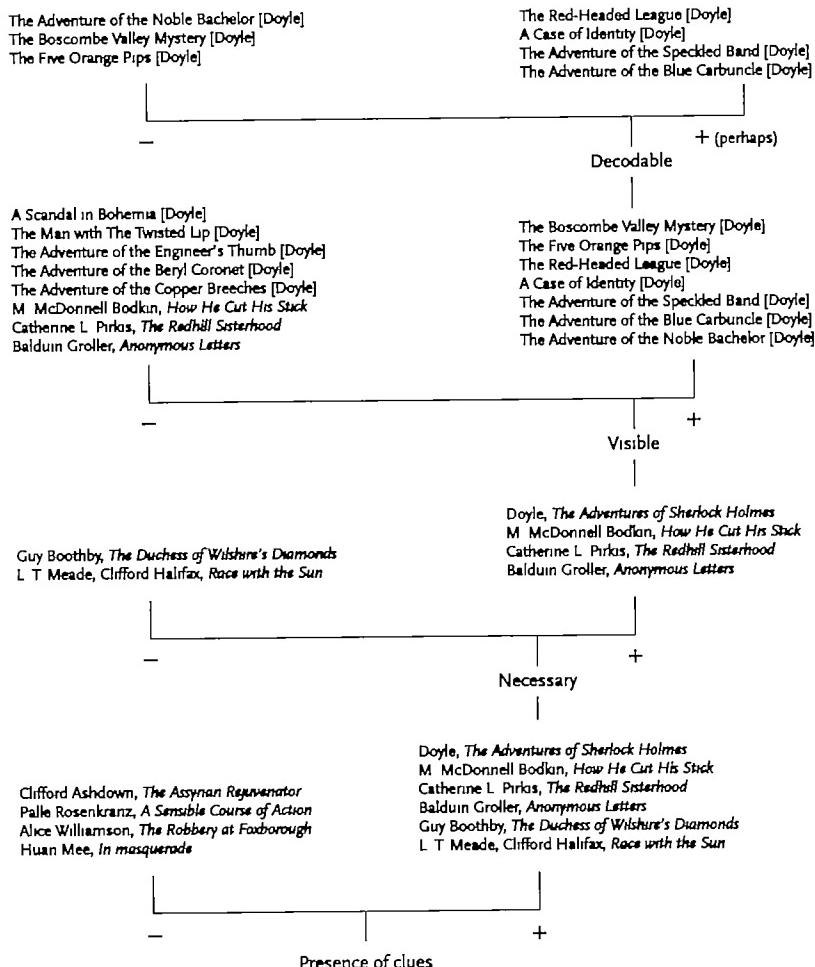
Third branching: clues are present, they have a function, but are not visible: the detective mentions them in his final explanation, but we have never ‘seen’ them in the course of the story. Here we lose the last of Doyle’s rivals (which is exactly what we had expected), but we also lose half of the *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, which we hadn’t expected at all; and the next branching—clues must be not just visible, but decodable by the reader: soon to become a key ‘technical law’ of the genre—is even more surprising, since decodable clues appear, even being generous, in only four of the twelve *Adventures*, and being strict, in none of them.

Why this last-minute stumble on Doyle’s part? I try to explain it in ‘The Slaughterhouse of Literature’, and will not repeat the argument here. But I will mention an objection raised in the course of the seminar to the logic behind figure 3. This tree, said one of the participants, assumes that morphology is the key factor of literary history: that Doyle owes his phenomenal success to his greater skill in the handling of clues; to his being the only one who made it to the top of the tree, as it were. But why should form be the decisive reason for survival? Why not social privilege

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<sup>9</sup> I am here summarizing and updating the results of a larger study: see ‘The Slaughterhouse of Literature’, *Modern Language Quarterly*, March 2000.

FIGURE 3: Presence of clues and the genesis of detective fiction



From the standpoint of technique, the devices employed by Conan Doyle in his stories are simpler than the devices we find in other English mystery novels. On the other hand, they show greater concentration . . . The most important clues take the form of secondary facts, which are presented in such a way that the reader does not notice them . . . they are intentionally placed in the oblique form of a subordinate clause . . . on which the storyteller does not dwell.

Viktor Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*

instead—the fact that Doyle was writing for a well-established magazine, and his rivals were not?

Plausible. So I went to the library, where I discovered that, in the course of the 1890s, over one hundred detective stories by twenty-five different authors had been published in the *Strand Magazine* alongside Sherlock Holmes. Since so many writers had access to the same venue as Doyle, the ‘social privilege’ objection lost its force; but, more importantly, the study of those hundred-odd stories—while confirming the uniqueness of Doyle’s technical feat—also added two entirely new branches to the initial tree of detective fiction (figure 4). The more one looked in the archive, in other words, the more complex became the genre’s morphospace. The ‘family of narrative forms’ evoked in the first of these articles was beginning to take shape.

### III

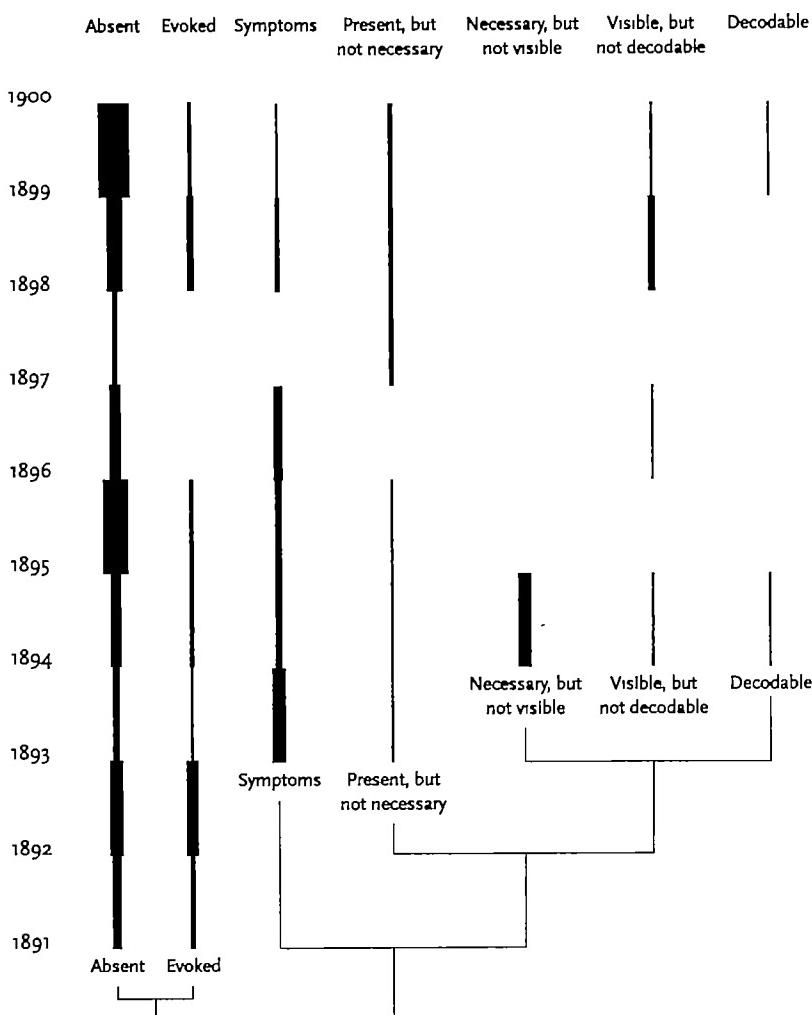
Is divergence a factor, in literary history? These first findings suggest a cautious Yes. But what is it, that generates this morphological drifting-away? Texts? I doubt it. Texts are distributed on the branches of the tree, yes, but the ‘nodes’ of the branching process are not defined by texts here, but by clues (their absence, presence, visibility etc): by something that is much *smaller* than any individual text—a sentence, a metaphor ('It was the band! The speckled band!'), at times ('I could only catch some allusion to a rat') not even a full word. And on the other hand, this system of differences at the microscopic level adds up to something that is much *larger* than any individual text, and which in our case is of course the genre—or the tree—of detective fiction.

The very small, and the very large; these are the forces that shape literary history. Devices and genres; not texts. Texts are certainly the *real objects* of literature (in the *Strand Magazine* you don’t find ‘clues’ or ‘detective fiction’, you find *Sherlock Holmes*, or *Hilda Wade*, or *The Adventures of a Man of Science*); but they are not the right *objects of knowledge* for literary history. Take the concept of genre: usually, literary criticism approaches it in terms of what Ernst Mayr calls ‘typological thinking’:<sup>10</sup> we choose a

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<sup>10</sup> See Ernst Mayr, *Populations, Species and Evolution*, Cambridge, MA 1970; *Evolution and the Diversity of Life*, Cambridge, MA 1976; and *Toward a New Philosophy of Biology*, Cambridge, MA 1988.

FIGURE 4: *Presence of clues and the genesis of detective fiction*



In this diagram, where the thickness of the line indicates the number of stories published during each year, the two new branches are the second and third from the left. The former includes those stories in which clues are not present, but are verbally evoked, or perhaps invoked by the characters ('If only we had a clue!', 'Did you find any clues?'), in what is probably another awkward attempt to smuggle them into a text that does not really need them. In the third branch from the left, clues are present, but always in the form of medical symptoms, as if in an homage to the old art of medical semiotics—which had of course been Doyle's model from the very start: Holmes is modelled on Edinburgh's Dr Bell, has always a doctor at his side, studies his clients as if they were patients, etc.

'representative individual', and through it define the genre as a whole. *Sherlock Holmes*, say, and detective fiction; *Wilhelm Meister*, and the *Bildungsroman*; you analyse Goethe's novel, and it counts as an analysis of the entire genre, because for typological thinking there is really no gap between the real object and the object of knowledge. But once a genre is visualized *as a tree*, the continuity between the two inevitably disappears: the genre becomes an abstract 'diversity spectrum' (Mayr again), whose internal multiplicity no individual text will ever be able to represent. And so, even 'A Scandal in Bohemia' becomes just one leaf among many: delightful, of course—but no longer entitled to stand for the genre as a whole.

A diversity spectrum. Quite wide, in figures 3 and 4, because when a new genre first arises, and no 'central' convention has yet crystallized, its space-of-forms is usually open to the most varied experiments. And then, there is the pressure of the market. The twenty-five authors of the *Strand Magazine* are all competing for the same, limited market niche, and their meanderings through morphospace have probably a lot to do with a keen desire to outdo each other once and for all: when mystery writers come up with an 'aeronaut' who kills a hiker with the anchor of his balloon, or a somnambulist painter who draws the face of the man he has murdered, or a chair that catapults its occupants into a neighboring park, they are clearly looking for the Great Idea that will seal their success. And yet, just as clearly, aeronauts and catapults are totally *random* attempts at innovation, in the sense in which evolutionary theory uses the term: they show no foreknowledge—no idea, really—of what may be good for literary survival. In making writers branch out in every direction, then, the market also pushes them into all sorts of crazy blind alleys; and divergence becomes indeed, as Darwin had seen, inseparable from extinction.

There are many ways of being alive, writes Richard Dawkins, but many more ways of being dead—and figures 3 and 4, with all those texts that were so quickly forgotten, bear out his point: literary pathology, one may almost call it. But instead of reiterating the verdict of the market, abandoning extinct literature to the oblivion decreed by its initial readers, these trees take the lost 99 per cent of the archive and reintegrate it into the fabric of literary history, allowing us to finally 'see' it. It is the same project of the first article in this series, 'Graphs', from a different angle: whereas graphs abolish all qualitative difference among their data, trees try to *articulate* that difference. In the graph of British novels between

1710 and 1850, for instance (figure 2 of 'Graphs'), *Pride and Prejudice* and *The life of Pill Garlick; rather a whimsical sort of fellow*, appear as exactly alike: two dots in the 1813 column, impossible to tell apart. But figures 3 and 4 aim precisely at distinguishing 'The Red-Headed League' from 'The Assyrian Rejuvenator' and 'How He Cut His Stick', thus establishing an intelligible relationship between canonical and non-canonical branches.

## IV

Trees; or, divergence in literary history. But this view of culture usually encounters a very explicit objection. 'Among the many differences in deep principle between natural evolution and cultural change', writes Stephen Jay Gould, their 'topology'—that is to say, the abstract overall shape of natural and cultural history—is easily the most significant:

Darwinian evolution at the species level and above is a story of continuous and irreversible proliferation . . . a process of constant separation and distinction. Cultural change, on the other hand, receives a powerful boost from amalgamation and anastomosis of different traditions. A clever traveller may take one look at a foreign wheel, import the invention back home, and change his local culture fundamentally and forever.<sup>11</sup>

The traveller and his wheel are not a great example (they are a case of simple diffusion, not of amalgamation), but the general point is clear, and is frequently made by historians of technology. George Basalla:

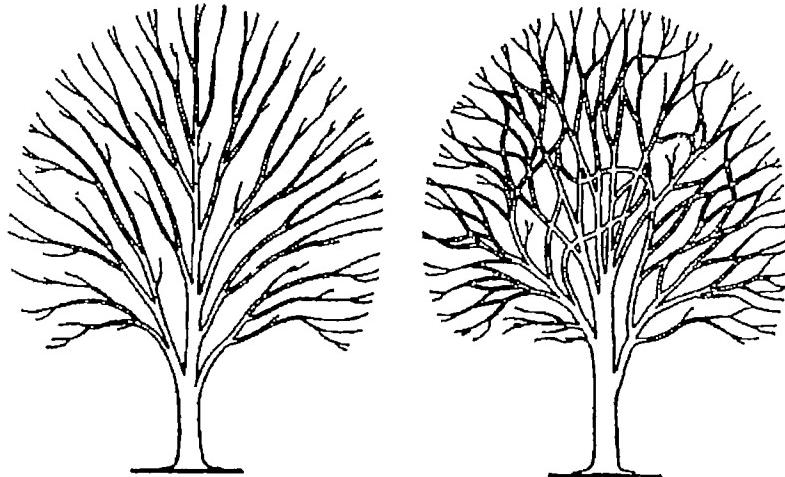
Different biological species usually do not interbreed, and on the rare occasions when they do their offspring are infertile. Artifactual types, on the other hand, are routinely combined to produce new and fruitful entities . . . The internal combustion engine branch was joined with that of the bicycle and horse-drawn carriage to create the automobile branch, which in turn merged with the dray wagon to produce the motor truck.<sup>12</sup>

Artifactual species combined in new and fruitful entities: in support of his thesis, Basalla reproduces Alfred Kroeber's ingenious 'tree of culture' (figure 5, overleaf), whose Alice-in-Wonderland quality makes the reality of convergence unforgettably clear. As it should be, because convergence is indeed a major factor of cultural evolution. But is it *the only one*?

<sup>11</sup> Stephen Jay Gould, *Full House. The Spread of Excellence from Plato to Darwin*, New York 1996, pp. 220–1.

<sup>12</sup> George Basalla, *The Evolution of Technology*, Cambridge 1988, pp. 137–8.

FIGURE 5: *Tree of Culture*



THE TREE OF LIFE AND THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF  
GOOD AND EVIL—THAT IS, OF HUMAN CULTURE

The course of organic evolution can be portrayed properly as a tree of life, as Darwin has called it, with trunk, limbs, branches, and twigs. The course of development of human culture in history cannot be so described, even metaphorically. There is a constant branching-out, but the branches also grow together again, wholly or partially, all the time. Culture diverges, but it syncretizes and anastomoses too. Life really does nothing but diverge: its occasional convergences are superficial resemblances, not a joining or a reabsorption. A branch on the tree of life may approach another branch; it will not normally coalesce with it. The tree of culture, on the contrary, is a ramification of such coalescences, assimilations, or acculturations. This schematic diagram visualizes this contrast

Alfred Kroeber, *Anthropology*

'Culture diverges, but it syncretizes and anastomoses too', runs Kroeber's comment to the tree of culture; and Basalla: 'the oldest surviving made things ... stand at the beginning of the *interconnected, branching*, continuous series of artifacts shaped by deliberate human effort'. Interconnected and branching; syncretism and divergence: rather than irreconcilable 'differences in deep principle' between convergence and divergence, passages like these (which could be easily multiplied) suggest a sort of

division of labour between them; or perhaps, better, a cycle to which they both contribute in turn. Convergence, I mean, only arises *on the basis of previous divergence*, and the power of its results tends in fact to be directly proportional to the distance between the original branches (bicycles, and internal combustion engines). Conversely, a successful convergence usually produces *a powerful new burst of divergence*: like the ‘new evolutionary series [which] began almost immediately after Whitney’s [cotton gin] was put to work’, and which quickly became, concludes Basalla, ‘the point of origin for an entirely new set of artifacts’.<sup>13</sup>

Divergence prepares the ground for convergence, which unleashes further divergence: this seems to be the typical pattern.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the force of the two mechanisms varies widely from field to field, ranging from the pole of technology, where convergence is particularly strong, to the opposite extreme of language, where divergence—remember the ‘matrix of distances’ of figure 2—is clearly the dominant factor; while the specific position of literature—this technology-of-language—within the whole spectrum remains to be determined.<sup>15</sup> And don’t be misled by the ‘topological’ technicalities of all this: the real content of the controversy, not technical at all, is our very idea of culture. Because if the basic mechanism of change is that of divergence, then cultural history is bound to be random, full of false starts, and profoundly path-dependent: a direction, once taken, can seldom be reversed, and culture hardens into a true ‘second nature’—hardly a benign metaphor. If, on the other hand, the basic mechanism is that of convergence, change will be frequent, fast, deliberate, reversible: culture becomes more plastic, more *human*, if you

<sup>13</sup> Basalla, *The Evolution of Technology*, pp. 30, 34.

<sup>14</sup> It is easy (in theory, at least) to apply this cyclical matrix to the history of genres: convergence among separate lineages would be decisive in the production of new genres; then, once a genre’s form stabilizes, ‘interbreeding’ would stop, and divergence would become the dominant force.

<sup>15</sup> In Thomas Pavel’s recent *La Pensée du Roman*, Paris 2003, which is the most ambitious theory of the novel since the masterpieces of the inter-war years, divergence is the fundamental force during the first seventeen centuries of the novel’s existence, and convergence in the last three (these are my extrapolations, not Pavel’s). The interpretation of these results is however far from obvious. Should one insist on the striking quantitative supremacy of divergence even in the notoriously ‘syncretic’ genre of the novel? Or should one focus on the (apparent) historical trend, viewing divergence as a ‘primitive’ morphological principle, and convergence as a more ‘mature’ one? And are Balzac, say, or Joyce, only instances of convergence (pp. 245, 373)—or are they also the initiators of strikingly new formal branches? All questions for another occasion.

wish. But as human history is so seldom human, this is perhaps not the strongest of arguments.

## V

One last tree: this time, not the ‘many more ways of being dead’ of Conan Doyle’s rivals, but the still numerous ‘ways of being alive’ discovered between 1800 and 2000 by that great narrative device known as ‘free indirect style’. The technique was first noticed in an article on French grammar published in 1887 in the *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, which described it, in passing, as ‘a peculiar mix of indirect and direct discourse, which draws the verbal tenses and pronouns from the former, and the tone and the order of the sentence from the latter’.<sup>16</sup> *Mansfield Park*:

It was the abode of noise, disorder, and impropriety. Nobody was in their right place, nothing was done as it ought to be. She could not respect her parents, as she had hoped.<sup>17</sup>

Nobody was *in their right place*, nothing was done *as it ought to be*: the tone is clearly Fanny’s, and expresses her profound emotional frustration at her parents’ house. Nobody *was* in their right place . . . *She could* not respect *her* parents: the (past) verbal tenses and (third person) pronouns evoke for their part the typical distance of narrative discourse. Emotions, plus distance: it is truly an odd *Mischung*, free indirect style, but its composite nature was precisely what made it ‘click’ with that other strange compromise formation which is the process of modern socialization: by leaving the individual voice a certain amount of freedom, while permeating it with the impersonal stance of the narrator, free indirect style enacted that *véritable transposition de l’objectif dans le subjectif*<sup>18</sup> which is indeed the substance of the socialization process. And the result was the genesis of an unprecedented ‘third’ voice, intermediate and almost neutral in tone between character and narrator: the composed, slightly abstract voice of the *well-socialized individual*, of which Austen’s heroines—these

<sup>16</sup> A. Tobler, ‘Vermischte Beiträge zur französischen Grammatik’, *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, 1887, p. 437.

<sup>17</sup> *Mansfield Park*, ch. 39

<sup>18</sup> Charles Bally, ‘Le style indirecte libre en français moderne’, *Germanisch-Romanische Monatschrift*, 1912, second part, p. 603.

young women who speak of themselves *in the third person*, as if from the outside—are such stunning examples.<sup>19</sup>

Placed as it is halfway between social *doxa* and the individual voice, free indirect style is a good indicator of their changing balance of forces, of which the tree in figure 6 (overleaf) offers a schematic visualization. And as can be seen, not much happens as long as free indirect style remains confined to western Europe; at most, we have the gradual, entropic drift from ‘reflective’ to ‘non-reflective’ consciousness:<sup>20</sup> that is to say, from sharp punctual utterances like those in *Mansfield Park*, to Flaubert’s and Zola’s all-encompassing moods, where the character’s inner space is unknowingly colonized by the commonplaces of public opinion. But just as the individual mind seems about to be submerged by ideology, a geographical shift to the east reverses the trend, associating free indirect style with conflict rather than with consensus. Raskolnikov’s inner speech, writes Bakhtin

is filled with other people’s words that he has recently heard or read [and is] constructed like a succession of living and impassioned replies to all those words . . . He does not think about phenomena, he speaks with them . . . he addresses himself (often in the second person singular, as if to another person), he tries to persuade himself, he taunts, exposes, ridicules himself<sup>21</sup>

A language filled with ‘other people’s words’, just like Emma Bovary’s: but where those words, instead of being passively echoed, arouse ‘living and impassioned replies’. Here are Raskolnikov’s reactions to the news of his sister’s impending (and loveless) marriage:

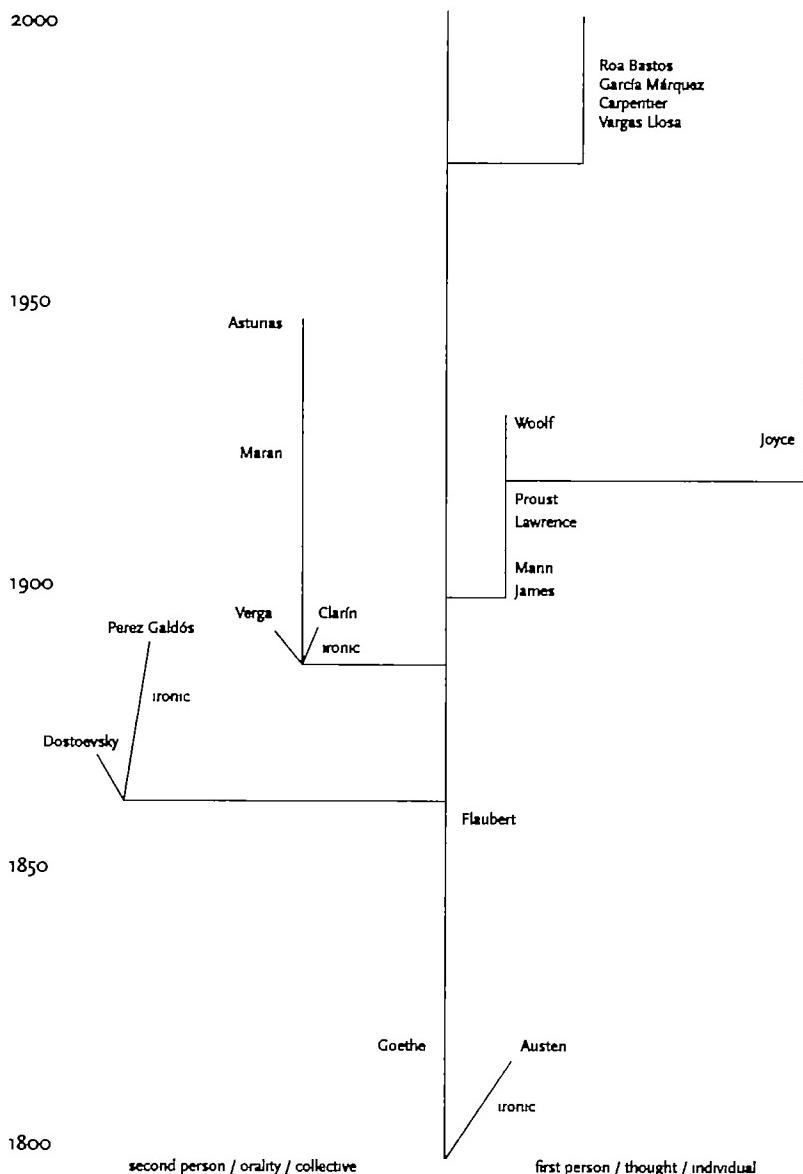
‘Won’t take place? And what are you going to do to stop it? Forbid it? By what right? What can you promise them instead, in order to possess such a right?’

<sup>19</sup> I have analyzed in detail the connexion between free indirect style and socialization in ‘Il secolo serio’, *Il romanzo*, vol. 1, Torino 2001 (forthcoming, Princeton 2005). Needless to say, I do not claim that free indirect style is *only* used to represent the process of socialization (which would be absurd), but rather that between the two existed—especially early on—a profound elective affinity.

<sup>20</sup> For these terms, see Ann Banfield’s classic study of free indirect style, *Unspeakable Sentences*, Boston 1982.

<sup>21</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 1929–63, Minneapolis 1984, pp. 237–8. The dialogic reinterpretation of free indirect style sketched by Bakhtin is extensively developed in Volosinov’s chapters on ‘quasi-direct discourse’ in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* [1929], Cambridge, MA 1993, pp. 125–59; see also Gary Morson and Caryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin. Creation of a Prosaics*, Palo Alto, CA 1990, esp. pp. 343–4.

FIGURE 6: *Free indirect style in modern narrative, 1800–2000*



This figure reflects work in progress, and is therefore quite tentative, especially in the case of non-European literatures, and of the diachronic span of the various branches.

To devote your whole life, your whole future to them, *when you finish your course and get a job?* We've heard that one before, that's just maybe—what about *now*? I mean, you've got to do something right now, do you realize that? . . . It was a long time since [these questions] had began to lacerate his heart, and it was positively an age since his present sense of anguish and depression had come into being . . . It was clear that now was not the time to feel miserable, to suffer passively with the thought that the questions were not capable of resolution; no, instead he must do *something*, and at once, as quickly as possible. Whatever happened, he must take some action, or else . . .<sup>22</sup>

Great page. But can we really speak of free indirect style for those sentences in ‘the second person singular, as if to another person’ that open the passage, and that are so crucial for Bakhtin’s argument (and for his entire theory of the novel)? No, not quite: the second person (especially if in quotes) indicates the *direct* discourse of an open-ended discussion, rather than (as in the second half of the passage) the *narrative* report of thoughts and emotions. Why this double register, then, why this shift in the representation of Raskolnikov’s inner debate? Probably, what happened was something like this: entrusted by Dostoevsky with a dialogic task so unlike its usual one, the free indirect style of *Crime and Punishment* became more intense and dramatic ('he must take some action, or else') than ever before, ‘stretching’ as far as it possibly could; but in the end, the open-endedness of dialogism was incompatible with the narrative register of free indirect style, and so—in a little morphological ‘catastrophe’—the latter’s key traits were all rearranged according to a different logic. A border had been crossed, and free indirect style had ‘mutated’ into something else.

## VI

Bakhtin’s conceptual vocabulary, with its emphasis on the oral threads within novelistic prose, is a good prologue to the next branching of the tree, which occurs around 1880, at the height of the naturalist movement. Here, the *fault line*—which is, again, geographic and morphological at once—runs between different forms of symbolic hegemony in *fin-de-siècle* Europe: in the West, the silent, interiorized *doxa* of large nation-states, arising almost impersonally from newspapers, books, and

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<sup>22</sup> *Crime and Punishment*, ch. 4.

an anonymous public opinion; in the South, the noisy, *multi-personal* 'chorus' (Leo Spitzer) of the small village of *I Malavoglia*, or the sharp whispers of the provincial confessinals of *La Regenta*; later, the *longue durée* of collective oral myths in *Batouala* or *Men of Maize*.<sup>23</sup> Here, free indirect style embodies a form of social cohesion which—in its reliance on explicit, *spoken* utterances, rather than 'non-reflective' absorption—is more quarrelsome and intrusive than in western Europe, but also much more unstable: the spokesmen for the social (villagers, confessor, chief) must be always *physically there*, ready to reiterate over and over again the dominant values, or else things fall apart. As indeed they do, in all of these novels.

So far, we have followed free indirect style as it explored the 'objective' pole of its tonal scale: the 'truths' of the neo-classical narrator and the *doxa* of public opinion; the force (in Dostoevsky) of abstract theories and ideas, and the myths of traditional societies. Around 1900, however, a different group of writers begins to experiment at the opposite end of the spectrum, that of the irreducibly singular. First comes a cluster of upper-class stylizations (James, Mann, Proust, Woolf . . .), where the deviation from social norms is often so slight that it may not even form a separate branch; then, more decisively, Joyce's generation moves well beyond 'non-reflective consciousness', into the pre-, or un-conscious layers of psychic life. And at this point, a second stylistic 'catastrophe' occurs: just as, in *Crime and Punishment*, the third person of narrative discourse was taking turns with the second person of dialogue, in *Ulysses* it is constantly sliding into the first person of the stream of consciousness—with all the galaxy of idiosyncratic associations that this

<sup>23</sup> Two examples. 'Nowadays mischief-makers got up to all kinds of tricks; and at Trezza you saw faces which had never been seen there before, on the cliffs, people claiming to be going fishing, and they even stole the sheets put out to dry, if there happened to be any. Poor Nunziata had had a new sheet stolen that way. Poor girl! Imagine robbing her, a girl who had worked her fingers to the bone to provide bread for all those little brothers her father had left on her hands when he had upped and gone to seek his fortune in Alexandria of Egypt.' Giovanni Verga, *I Malavoglia*, ch. 2.

'He's a good old man, the sun, and so equitable! He shines for all living people, from the greatest to the most humble. He knows neither rich nor poor, neither black nor white. Whatever may be their colour, whatever may be their fortune, all men are his sons. He loves them all equally; favours their plantations, dispels, to please them, the cold and sullen fog; reabsorbs the rain; and drives out the shadow Ah! The shadow Unpitifully, relentlessly, the sun pursues it wherever it may be. He hates nothing else.' René Maran, *Batouala*, ch. 8.

technique entails.<sup>24</sup> And through the prism of this small grammatical shift, one can again glimpse a branching process of a higher order, where psychological realism 'speciates' into modernist epics, just as, earlier, it had metamorphosed into dialogic novels.

In the final branching of the tree—Latin American 'dictator novels'—the fluctuation between third and first person is still there, but its direction has been reversed: in place of a third person narrative modulating into a first person monologue, we see the dictator's attempt to objectify his private (and pathological) self into the monumental poses of a public persona. 'My dynasty begins and ends in me, in I-HE,' writes Augusto Roa Bastos in *I the Supreme*; and towards the end of the book:

HE, erect, with his usual brio, the sovereign power of his first day. One hand behind him, the other tucked in the lapel of his frock coat . . . I is HE, definitively, I-HE-SUPREME. Immemorial. Imperishable.<sup>25</sup>

In Roa Bastos' novel, as in Carpentier's *Reasons of State* and García Márquez's *General in his Labyrinth*—the other two dictator novels of 1974, a year after the *putsch* against Allende in Chile—the 'I' of El Supremo still largely overshadows his 'HE', thus confining free indirect style to quite a limited role. But with Mario Vargas Llosa the technique moves into the foreground, and realizes its full political potential: by presenting the mind of the dictator 'unmediated by any judging point of view'—to repeat Ann Banfield's limpid definition of free indirect style<sup>26</sup>—Vargas Llosa endows the putrid substratum of political terror with an unforgettablely sinister matter-of-factness:

Had the United States had a more sincere friend than him, in the past thirty-one years? What government had given them greater support in the UN? Which was the first to declare war on Germany and Japan? Who gave the biggest bribes to representatives, senators, governors, mayors, lawyers and reporters in the United States? His reward: economic sanctions by the OAS to make that nigger Rómulo Betancourt happy, to keep sucking at the tit of the Venezuelan oil. If Johnny Abbes had handled things better and the bomb had blown off the head of that faggot Rómulo, there wouldn't be any

<sup>24</sup> 'He looked down at the boots he had blacked and polished. She had outlived him. Lost her husband. More dead for her than for me. One must outlive the other. Wise men say. There are more women than men in the world. Condole with her. Your terrible loss. I hope you'll soon follow him. For hindu widows only. She would marry another. Him? No. Yet who knows after.' James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ch. 6.

<sup>25</sup> Roa Bastos, *I the Supreme*, Normal, IL 2000, pp. 123, 419.

<sup>26</sup> Ann Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences*, Boston 1982, p. 97.

sanctions and the asshole gringos wouldn't be handing him bullshit about sovereignty, democracy, and human rights.<sup>27</sup>

## VII

From the abode of noise and impropriety, where nobody was in their right place, to the asshole gringos handing him bullshit about sovereignty, democracy, and human rights. This is what comparative literature could be, if it took itself seriously as *world literature*, on the one hand, and as *comparative morphology*, on the other. Take a form, follow it from space to space, and study the reasons for its transformations: the 'opportunistic, hence unpredictable' reasons of evolution, in Ernst Mayr's words.<sup>28</sup> And of course the multiplicity of spaces is the great challenge, and the curse, almost, of comparative literature: but it is also its peculiar strength, because it is only in such a wide, non-homogeneous geography that some fundamental principles of cultural history become manifest. As, here, the dependence of morphological novelty on spatial discontinuity: 'allopatric speciation', to quote Ernst Mayr one more time: a new species (or at any rate a new formal arrangement), arising when a population migrates into a new homeland, and must quickly change in order to survive. Just like free indirect style when it moves into Petersburg, Aci Trezza, Dublin, Ciudad Trujillo . . .

Spatial discontinuity boosting morphological divergence. It's a situation that reminds me of Gide's reflections on the form of the novel at the time he was writing *The Counterfeiters*: granted that the novel is a slice of life, he muses, why should we always slice 'in the direction of length', emphasizing the passage of time? why not slice *in the direction of width*, and of the multiplicity of simultaneous events? Length, plus width: this is how a tree signifies. And you look at figure 6, or at the others before it, and cannot help but wonder: which is the most significant axis, here—the vertical, or the horizontal? diachronic succession, or synchronic drifting apart? This perceptual uncertainty between history and form—this impossibility, in fact, of really 'seeing' them both at once—is the result of a new conception of literary history, in which literature moves forwards *and sideways* at once; often, more sideways than forwards. Like Shklovsky's great metaphor for art, the knight's move at chess.

<sup>27</sup> Vargas Llosa, *The Feast of the Goat*, ch. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Mayr, *Toward a new Philosophy of Biology*, p. 458.

## VIII

Three articles; three models; three snapshots of the literary field: first the system as a whole, then the middle ground of chronotopes and genres, and now the micro-level of stylistic devices. But despite the difference of scale, some constants remain. First, a total indifference to the philosophizing that goes by the name of 'Theory' in literature departments. It is precisely *in the name of theoretical knowledge* that 'Theory' should be forgotten, and replaced with the extraordinary array of conceptual constructions—theories, plural, and with a lower case 't'—developed by the natural and by the social sciences. 'Theories are nets', wrote Novalis, 'and only he who casts will catch'. Theories are nets, and we should learn to evaluate them for the empirical data they allow us to process and understand: for how they *concretely change the way we work*, rather than as ends in themselves. Theories are nets; and there are so many interesting creatures that await to be caught, if only we try.

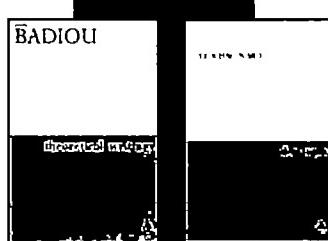
Finally, the approaches I have discussed (and others that could have been added) also share a clear preference for *explanation over interpretation*. They don't offer a new reading of *Waverley*, *Black Forest Village Stories*, or *I Malavoglia*, but aim to understand the larger structures within which these have a meaning in the first place: the temporal cycles which determine the coming and going of genres, or the circular patterns typical of old village culture, or the stylistic branches that delimit the social function of free indirect style. Were I to name a common denominator for all these attempts, I would probably choose: *a materialist conception of form*. An echo of the Marxist problematic of the 1960s and 70s? Yes and no. Yes, because the great idea of that critical season—form as the most profoundly social aspect of literature: *form as force*, as I put it in the close to my previous article—remains for me as valid as ever. And no, because I no longer believe that a single explanatory framework may account for the many levels of literary production and their multiple links with the larger social system: whence the conceptual eclecticism of these articles, and the tentative nature of many of the examples. Much remains to be done, of course, on the compatibility of the various models, and the explanatory hierarchy to be established among them. But right now, opening new conceptual possibilities seemed more important than justifying them in every detail.

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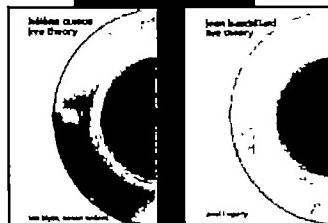
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## THE TURKISH BELL JAR

THE SUMMER OF 2004 has seen a new sense of optimism in Turkey. A stable government has garnered a series of successes both in legislating democratic reforms and in international diplomacy. Long-promised rights and safeguards have been put in place, significantly reducing the authoritarian legacy of the republican state. The EU announced that the country had fulfilled its requirements for political reform, and no longer had to be monitored. It is widely expected that negotiations for membership to the EU will be given the go-ahead later this year and that foreign capital may start to flow in. Inflation has been reduced and the economy is currently in an up-swing, registering a growth rate above 10 per cent last quarter. Yet, barely three years ago, Turkey's political instability—erupting in a public row between president and prime minister—catalysed a financial crisis, with a 50 per cent devaluation of the currency, severe recession and soaring unemployment. A year later, in summer 2002, the coalition government (Turkey's seventh in a decade) collapsed in disarray. The political and economic outcomes of these debacles unfolded within the context of the Iraq War and US-led occupation, EU pressures to reform the highly authoritarian state system, electoral breakthrough by the populist Islamist AKP and intensified IMF-led restructuring.

The 2001 crisis itself represented the collapse of a two-decade attempt by Turkey's traditional elite to shore up its faltering ideological hold through resort to state coercion. The state is a concept with an unequivocal referent in the Turkish context. In its eyes, the nation is an organic totality whose true interests can be known and fostered only by the Kemalist governing elite. It calls for constant vigilance against the forces who would dismantle the country and threaten Turkish national unity. The hegemony of the elite was established through the construction of the nation-state from the ashes of the Ottoman defeat, and sustained through the ordinary

apparatuses of school and barracks. It was perpetuated through its control over foreign exchange and credit during the three decades of developmentalism that followed the Second World War. The state's arsenal of policies and resources dominated a weak bourgeoisie and moulded the largest businessmen into a willing alliance around a strategy of centrally coordinated national development on the import-substitution model.

As in Latin America, development came to an end due to an inability to perpetuate a largely closed economy. The crisis was occasioned by problems in securing foreign exchange. Urbanization and industrialization had ensured that most of the basic consumption items, durable goods included, were manufactured domestically. The Turkish economy produced a sufficient quantity of the staples, such as steel and petrochemicals. Yet none of these sectors could hope to compete in the world market. State enterprises were burdened with excessive employment, while in the private sector, monopoly positions translated to high profits and high wages. Despite a respectable growth performance, the economy could not generate the foreign-exchange earnings that were needed for essential imports such as oil and new technology.

The response of the Turkish political establishment in the 1970s was to perpetuate national-developmentalism rhetoric, borrow dollars abroad, and continue to protect industry, support agriculture and subsidize consumers. They attempted to control the market by fiat, setting exchange rates and prices at artificial levels, and watched helplessly as shortages grew and a black market flourished. The economic crisis and the social dislocation it instigated fuelled the already raging political struggle between the hardline right and the revolutionary left. The 1980 military coup was thus a response to the economic impasse as well as to political crisis. It ushered in a regime of exception under which the alliance of statist and authoritarian interests succeeded in stalling all attempts to break through its own fog of nationalist ideology.

The chief institutional legacy of the three years of overt military tutelage (1980–83) was the 1982 Constitution. Under this basic law, the powers of a National Security Council (NSC) were expanded to form what amounted to a parallel government, while the State Security Courts became a parallel legal system with jurisdiction over 'crimes against the state'. Within the NSC, military chiefs of staff met with top cabinet members and dictated the policies to be followed. The NSC was endowed with

a permanent secretariat and staff, designed to pool all intelligence and to develop policy to be implemented by the relevant bureaucracy, often bypassing the politically appointed ministers.<sup>1</sup> It gradually extended its authority to cover any issue that could be deemed important in the total war against separatism and the Islamic movement. A Higher Education Council was established to oversee the universities, their personnel and syllabuses, and a similar body to regulate the content of all broadcast media. Virtually everything, from foreign and military policy to the structure of civil and political rights, from secondary-school curricula to energy policy, was eventually decided in the monthly meetings of the NSC, invariably along the lines formulated by its secretariat. The civilian governments that subsequently entered office, beginning with Turgut Özal's election victory in 1983, essentially concerned themselves with economic policy and the management of the debt. Meanwhile, the State Security Courts served as unabashed organs of the 'deep state': their jurisdiction extended to everything political, ranging from human rights to anything that the state construed as separatist propaganda, within which rubric even singing a song in Kurdish could qualify.<sup>2</sup>

### *Economic restructuring*

Under the military-NSC regime, a radical makeover of the economy could be embarked upon with minimum resistance. The gradual dismantlement of the import-substituting industrial sector took place against a backdrop of worsening income distribution. The share of wages and salaries in national income dropped from around 30 per cent in the 1970s to roughly 20 per cent in the 1980s. Wages in manufacturing had increased, more or less in line with productivity, over the three decades after 1950; by contrast, the level of real wages remained in 2000 what it had been in 1980, having dropped below that for long periods in between. Manufacturing employment in the public sector fell from 250,000 to 100,000 between 1980 and 2000, due to downsizing and privatization. Workers in the state-owned industries had constituted the core of the labour movement of the 1960s and 70s—organized trade unionists who received relatively high wages and good benefits. With

<sup>1</sup> The real status of the NSC emerged during the course of the war against the Kurdish population in the Southeast: the administration of the war region and all matters of free speech and exercise of rights connected to the Kurdish problem and ethnic matters came under the NSC's de facto authority.

<sup>2</sup> 'Bir Zümre, Bir Parti, Türkiye'de Ordu', articles by Ömer Laçiner, Ahmet Insel, Tanıl Bora and Gülay Günluk-Şenesen, special issue of *Birikim*, Aug–Sept, 2002.

privatization, deregulation and flexible employment, the advantages they had enjoyed in a protected manufacturing sector rapidly eroded. Subcontracting, the spread of smaller enterprises and piecework became standard practices; especially as the service sector gained ground, informal and diversified conditions of work increased.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, market liberalization unleashed entrepreneurial energies at every level; traders and merchants were suddenly permitted to do things for which they would have served jail sentences a few years earlier. The industrial structures of the developmentalist era had been characterized by the oligopoly of a few multi-tentacled holding companies, through which the import-substituting bourgeoisie of Istanbul, with their privileged access to policy makers in Ankara, had been able to maintain an iron grip over the economy. With liberalization, a new breed of entrepreneurs emerged who had to compete in globalized markets, and indexed their behaviour to commercial and consumer signals rather than bureaucratic decisions; hence their dependence on policy was less direct. As Turkish exports gravitated toward labour-intensive manufactures, a number of smaller Anatolian cities with craft traditions and non-unionized workforces, where households could be incorporated in subcontracting deals, began to emerge as regional industrial centres.<sup>4</sup> Most of the production in these towns, the so-called Anatolian Tigers, was located on buyer-driven networks: businessmen contracted directly with retail chains and volume buyers in Europe. Dealings with the economic bureaucracy of the state were considered a burden rather than a benefit.

The 1980s thus saw the emergence of new sectors, new markets, new forms of labour organization and new geographies. Exports increased from \$3 billion in 1980 to \$13 billion in 1990, and to \$50 billion in 2003—the expansion entirely due to manufactures, especially textiles. From Ankara's point of view, the new businessmen functioned outside the customary networks of influence and privilege, and did not share the westernized style and militant secularism of their more entrenched counterparts in Istanbul; they were more likely to support an Islamic

<sup>3</sup> Today only five per cent of the labour force is unionized—barely one million, out of over twenty million workers—within a highly fragmented institutional structure.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Asuman Türkun-Erendil, 'Mit ve Gerçeklik Olarak Denizli—Üretim ve İşgucunun Değişen Yapısı', *Toplum ve Bilim*, no. 86, 2000. This pattern well conforms with the expectations of post-Fordist theory: see Charles Sabel, 'Flexible Specialization and the Re-emergence of Regional Economies', in Ash Amin, ed., *Post-Fordism*, Oxford 1994.

party, and to associate themselves with MÜSİAD, an association of Islamic businessmen, which became an important social and political counter-weight to the association of Istanbul industrialists, TÜSİAD.<sup>5</sup>

### *Islamist movement*

Opening to the world market and restructuring the economy depleted the resources that had served to purchase popular consent. The last two decades of Turkish history have been coloured by state forces attempting to find new ways of securing domination over a transformed and increasingly vocal society. Having lost the legitimacy accorded them during the developmentalist period, since 1980 they have relied heavily on various forms of coercion to maintain the statist equation in face of emerging forces that have sought to establish their own economic, cultural and political autonomy. The rise of the Islamist parties has posed a particular dilemma for the traditional ruling class. Secularism, defined as strict state control over religion, has been a principal concern of the Turkish elite since the inception of the republic. In their conception of modernization, western modes of conduct had to be adopted to replace local particularisms; Islam, of course, was the most blatant expression of the local. Furthermore, a fundamentalist interpretation of Islamic law conflicted with both the allegiance required by the state of its citizens, and with the unique legal system that Kemalism wished to impose. However, contradicting their vigilant rhetoric, republicans have in fact been pragmatic in their dealings with even the more extreme versions of religious affiliation; their secularism conceals an underlying hypocrisy toward Islam and Islamists. Starting in the 1940s, political parties bargained with the leaders of sects, granting concessions on religious schools in exchange for their devotees' votes. After the coup in 1980, the military junta subscribed uncritically to the American policy of encouraging Islamism as a buffer against the socialist movement.<sup>6</sup> With the

<sup>5</sup> Ayşe Buğra, 'Class, Culture, and State', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 30, no. 4, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> During the Kurdish war, the 'deep state' contracted with a brutal extremist faction of Islamists, Hezbollah, to eliminate businessmen sympathising with the Kurdish side. Themselves mostly Kurds, Hezbollah were a fundamentalist Sunni faction, with no relation to the Shi'ite party of the same name. This patronage, it now appears, continued after hostilities ceased in the Southeast, facilitating Hezbollah's international mobility and alleged participation in the Istanbul suicide bombings of November 2003. The security force's pretence of being able to control the fundamentalists for its own purposes had backfired.

education system undermined by IMF fiscal austerity measures, enrolment in government-backed religious *lycées* grew faster than that in general secondary schools during the 1980s, and religion was made a compulsory element of the curriculum. During these years, party leaders competed for good relations with various moderate and modernist Islamic factions, Özal winning their support in 1983.

Since the mid-80s, Islamists have steadily increased their share of the vote. Under Necmettin Erbakan's leadership, the Islamist Refah (Welfare) Party won 8 per cent in 1987, 16 per cent in 1991 and 21 per cent in 1995. Observers of political Islam have argued that the fundamentalist platform, defined as a project to replace the modern state and western law with Islamic ones, appeals to no more than 6 or 7 per cent of the population. The much larger numbers that have voted for the Islamic parties have arguably done so not because they want an anti-secular systemic change but because they favour an opening, a widening of the base that the system acknowledges. Islam has served as a rallying cry for those who were forced to remain outside the imaginary city walls when large-scale urbanization started, for the smaller entrepreneurs against the state-supported bourgeoisie of Istanbul, for politicians who did not enjoy the military's stamp of approval.<sup>7</sup>

Earlier incarnations of Islamic parties—Refah, dissolved under pressure from the NSC in 1998, following its short-lived coalition government with Tansu Çiller's centre-right True Path (DYP), was replaced by Fazilet (Virtue), itself closed down in 2001—oscillated between defying the system and adapting to it, and failed to harness this populist impulse to a programme that would be politically acceptable to the Turkish elite. The 2001 split in the Islamist ranks after the Fazilet Party was banned saw the creation of the Adalet ve Kalkınma (Justice and Development) Party (AKP) led by Abdullah Gül and Tayyip Erdoğan, while the old guard around Erbakan set up the Saadet (Felicity) Party. The AKP successfully combined electoral rhetoric aimed at the excluded with a message to the elite that regime change was not on its agenda. In the November 2002

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<sup>7</sup> There is a lot written on the Islamic movement in Turkey. Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey*, Leiden 1981; Nilufer Gole, *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling*, Ann Arbor, MI 1996; Jenny White, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey*, Seattle, WA 2002, are representative. Also see Haldun Gülpalp, 'Globalization and Political Islam: The Social Bases of Turkey's Welfare Party', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 33, no. 3, 2001

elections the two Islamic parties received 37 per cent of the vote, with the AKP taking 34 per cent. The 10 per cent threshold imposed by the NSC's constitution duly disqualified all but one of the other parties, leaving the AKP with 60 per cent of the seats.<sup>8</sup>

The AKP's popular appeal is based on providing a voice to the heretofore excluded, while the validity of its material promises derives in large part from the local-government record of its precedent political formations, which succeeded in building a reputation for relative honesty in administrations customarily mired in corruption. These municipalities initiated social-assistance policies in an environment where there was virtually no government welfare policy targeting the poor, and where organized philanthropy was scant. They organized soup kitchens and health centres, offered in-kind aid to the destitute, and invariably set up social-assistance drives during Ramadan, pressuring local businessmen to donate goods, buildings and money. Such engagement involved large numbers of party activists (and especially young women) building networks and linking with the population. Tayyip Erdogan himself, was the popular mayor of Istanbul from 1994 until his brief imprisonment in 1998. Islamist parties have thus been the principal conduit for the expression of economic resentment. Despite the AKP leaders' genuine commitment to neoliberal orthodoxy, and although they also articulate the aspirations and discontent of a rising Anatolian bourgeoisie as against the established business oligarchy, they receive the bulk of their votes from the poor. This support from the excluded is due more to the critique of the political system and its corruption than to explicit promises of economic restructuring or a rights-based social policy.

### *Kurdish questions*

In addition to the Islamic movement, the issue that has occupied the Turkish agenda most consistently since 1980 has been the Kurdish problem. Any intimation of Kurdish or any other separatism was, of course, strictly forbidden at the foundation of the Republic, and the use of the Kurdish language in public speech or education has been rigidly outlawed ever since. Brutal cultural suppression combined with economic underdevelopment inevitably fed resistance. Martial law was continued in the

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<sup>8</sup> The popular votes were 9.6 per cent for Ciller's True Path, 8.3 per cent for the Nationalists, 5.1 per cent for Motherland and 1.2 per cent for Ecevit.

Kurdish provinces after 1983, accompanied by mass arrests, torture and forcible relocation of villagers. In 1984 Abdullah Öcalan returned from Syrian exile to lead the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) in guerrilla attacks on the security forces. State repression was intensified in return: the war would claim 30,000 lives before it finally ended in 1999.

During the 1990s, the war against the Kurdish forces was used to justify a gradual transition to a national security state, as the Army's chosen mode of response to the insurgency—military victory first, cultural freedoms later—gained the upper hand. The war allowed the return of the Rechtsstaat as the cloak under which a new era of repression and arbitrary rule could flourish. The tentative openings created under Özal after 1983—expansions of the social sphere to acknowledge the hitherto taboo lifestyles that market liberalization fostered—shrank back. A military-dominated authoritarianism coupled with a lack of accountability characterized the decade. All attempts at democracy and the rule of law were brutally quashed in the name of national security.

The military justified its regency on the basis of the war, yet the war also compromised its standing. The 'special forces' had gained a particular reputation for brutality in their dealings with civilians. Much of the population left the war zone. In the mid-1990s more than 1,500 rural settlements were evacuated as part of the military campaign against guerrilla forces, leading to a massive displacement of Kurdish peasants. The area had become a separate jurisdiction, governed by a law of exception. Conscripts reported on their dehumanizing experience under arms.<sup>9</sup> There were well-documented cases of torture in prisons, and instances of the military and intelligence services using civilians to eliminate suspected supporters of the PKK. As in similar cases elsewhere, funds for such clandestine activities were sometimes obtained through criminal means.

The military's strategy of defeating the guerrillas before there could be any talks on cultural and political rights would not have achieved its expensive success had a separatist platform enjoyed greater support. There

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<sup>9</sup> Nadire Mater, *Mehmedin Kitabı: Güneydoğu'da Savaşmış Askerler Anlatıyor*, Istanbul 1999, was a milestone. See the review article by Ayşe Gül Altınay, 'Mehmedin Kitabı: Challenging Narratives of War and Nationalism', *New Perspectives on Turkey*, no. 21, 1999. For a recent account see Hasan Cemal, *Kürtler*, Istanbul 2003; for a broader perspective Kemal Kirişci and Gareth Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey, an Example of a Trans-state Ethnic Conflict*, London 1997.

were historical and political reasons behind the PKK's failure. Under the Ottoman Empire, ethnicity—unlike religion or sect—had never been a barrier to assimilation or intermarriage. This legacy of ethnic neutrality has continued at the social level in modern Turkey, where the bourgeoisie and political-cultural elite derive from diverse backgrounds, and marriages bring together co-religionists of all ethnicities, including Kurds, Circassians, Albanians, Bosnians and recent converts to Islam. Assimilation has been the norm in the case of Kurds who have moved out of the Southeast and the East to western Turkey. Ethnic Kurds have long been prominent in politics, and were even over-represented in the parliament. The price of assimilation, however, was the suppression of ethnic identity. While in the Empire one could remain Kurdish and still become part of the Ottoman elite, in the Turkish nation-state Kurdishness, as all other ethnic allegiance, had to be a private affair; in public, all were Turks. Thus, while the politics of identity and cultural recognition would find a much wider appeal among Kurds living outside the region, separatism would not.

There are no reliable figures on the ethnic composition of the population in Turkey, since censuses assiduously avoid questions of ethnicity or native language. Best estimates suggest that the Kurdish population (defined variously) is between 10 to 20 per cent of the total, but intermarriage makes the count impossible. In 1990 perhaps a third of ethnic Kurds lived in the Western provinces of the country; in 2000, after ten years of war, the proportion had increased to 50 per cent. Istanbul is by far the largest Kurdish city, with more than one million Kurdish inhabitants. It would be difficult to find many proponents of a separatist movement subscribing to the goal of a landlocked Kurdistan among those living in western Turkey. Recent immigrants to Istanbul and the big cities of western Anatolia have been poor peasants, driven out of their villages, but with little desire to go back. In other words, most of the elite of Kurdish ethnic origin are not interested in a separatist solution, and it is unlikely that the subaltern Kurdish population, now making up a good proportion of the urban poor in large cities, will subscribe to any such movement.

There was an additional dimension which made it difficult for the Kurdish elite, rural or urban, to align with the nationalist movement. While earlier Kurdish insurrections of the 1920s and 1930s had originated within the landlord class and clergy, the modern movement was

rooted in the poor peasantry. The **PKK** started as an anti-feudal movement against Kurdish landlords in southeastern Turkey, who had been the willing allies of the republican state in maintaining social control. Elsewhere, the builders of the Turkish state had allied themselves with the independent peasantry and even supported poor farmers in occupying land, but they had shied away from changing the social balance in the Southeast. When the peasant movement started in the 1970s, Ankara sent gendarmes to protect the landlords from the insurrencies. This explains the ‘socialism’ of the **PKK**, its declared affinity with movements such as the Shining Path, but also the lack of support for the ideology and guerrilla tactics of the **PKK** and its commander Öcalan among the Kurdish elite. Some clan chiefs continued to back Ankara against the insurgents as the state recruited and armed a force of some 60,000 ‘village guards’, themselves ethnic Kurds, who were supposed to protect local populations against the guerrillas. Clashes were frequent between the two, and the **PKK**’s campaign to win over villagers sometimes degenerated into intimidation and massacres that almost took on the appearance of a Kurdish civil war.

The UN Security Council passed its first resolution on the Kurdish question in the aftermath of the Gulf War, with the creation of the US-monitored no-fly zone in northern Iraq—thus officially putting the issue of Kurds’ human rights on the international agenda. In the same year, Özal proposed a modification of the language ban to permit informal speech. In 1993 Öcalan declared a ceasefire and renounced the demand for an independent Kurdistan, instead claiming cultural and political freedoms. Özal’s sudden death put a halt to further negotiations, and his successors moved swiftly to strengthen the army’s presence in the Southeast. The war was finally brought to an end in 1999. That February, Öcalan was captured in Kenya, with Israeli and American help, flown back to Turkey for a State Security Court trial and condemned to death. In August, he called on the **PKK** to lay down its arms.

From Özal’s death onwards there had been no suggestion from civilian politicians that there might be a non-military solution. The NSC vetoed any attempts to broach the issue of cultural rights, although it gradually became acceptable to talk about what was euphemistically called ‘the Kurdish reality’. Yet even such symbolic gains were due to human-rights groups and journalists, rather than politicians. Against the backdrop of war, the political parties mostly remained quiet—tacitly

accepting the military's strategy, without questioning the effects of the rigid imposition of national identity on the population. Highly centralized inner-party regimes, with candidate lists drawn up by the leaders, assured block voting in the parliament. Ecevit's Democratic Left Party (DSP), dubbed a 'family partnership' in the press, was the most advanced in sycophancy. The far-right Nationalists (led by the veteran Turkes) were the more outspoken wing of the militarist camp, but Ecevit, with a similar emphasis on the sanctity of the nation and its sovereignty, was at least as adamant in upholding the strictures of the 1982 Constitution. The Motherland Party (ANAP) of Mesut Yilmaz and the DYP were more in the nature of loose associations of interest without a stable political line. All participated in one or other of the short-lived coalition governments that characterized the 1990s, dutifully towing the line set out by the NSC; all fell below the 10 per cent mark in the November 2002 elections. Only the extraordinary conditions of civil war and ideological confinement, imposed by the military, could allow their corruption and ineptitude to go unscathed.

One function of the 10 per cent threshold was to ensure that the Kurdish movement would not be represented in parliament. When, in 1994, the Kurdish parties formed an electoral alliance with the centre-left and sailed over the mark, six deputies were arrested on charges of aiding the PKK; they remained in prison until June 2004. With the parliament becoming an increasingly irrelevant sideshow, real political debate over issues of democracy, ethnic representation and the effects of economic liberalization shifted to various extra-parliamentary forums: human-rights groups, the feminist movement, anti-war platforms, NGOs.

### *Debt crisis*

In economic terms, too, the 1990s were Turkey's lost decade. Whereas growth had averaged 5.3 per cent during the 1980s, the economy shrank by 6 per cent in the crisis years of 1994 and 1999, and by 9 per cent in 2001. Investment fell, while bankruptcies and unemployment exploded. The average rate of inflation was around 80 per cent. Starting from manageable levels in the early 1990s, state indebtedness reached the alarming level of 150 per cent of GNP by 2001. With accumulation mounting every year, Turkey's entire tax revenue was required to service the debt; for the government to function beyond debt management, it had to have recourse to new loans. The level of debt accumulation

has been due in large part to the excessively high interest rates paid to domestic lenders, averaging over 20 per cent in real terms for much of the 1990s. With lending to the government bringing such returns, investment in the real sector suffered. Banks bought the bonds issued by the Treasury and offered attractive rates to depositors. The bulk of the debt was held by a small group at the top of the concentration of wealth, who owned the high-interest deposits in the banks. In 2002, interest payments reached around 20 per cent of GNP, nine-tenths of it for internal debt. A century ago, Rosa Luxemburg described how the Ottoman state was employed as a tax-collecting conduit for the appropriation of surplus by international financiers; the present-day beneficiaries are a small group of local rentiers.

The state's systematic transferral of tax revenues to a rentier class was bound to create resentment among the 'active and working elements' in the real economy.<sup>10</sup> Not only did they suffer a worsening income distribution, they were also deprived of public-sector expenditures due to fiscal exhaustion. The debt economy introduced another distortion in the form of the unusual profitability of financial activity, consisting mostly of transactions in government bonds. Banks would borrow in foreign markets to buy state debt, gambling on the differential between the interest rate and the depreciation of the Turkish lira. Domestic savers and investors maintained holdings in local and foreign currency, buying and selling according to their expectations. The ensuing volatility encouraged further speculation. In this frenzied contest over the division of the spoils, the financial sector collected high returns from mediation, and invited corruption, political meddling and cronyism. There was also a high incidence of cross-investment between the financial sector and influential media: publishers could leverage their influence to buy banks, and bankers safeguarded their position by acquiring media. The biggest incidents of corruption involved politicians in league with bank owners plundering the state treasury.

Meanwhile successive governments found themselves squeezed for funds. As neoliberal globalization made deeper inroads, the political class was unable to offer any protection to the population against the ravages of market forces. Instead of engaging in politically unpopular

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<sup>10</sup> Sentiments expressed by Keynes, quoted in Yılmaz Akyüz and Korkut Boratav, 'The Making of the Turkish Financial Crisis', Discussion Paper no. 158, UNCTAD, 2002. Also see Erinc Yeldan, *Kureselleşme Sürecinde Türkiye Ekonomisi*, İstanbul 2001.

tax reform, they restricted all expenditures in line with IMF prescriptions. Thus public education and health services were left to deteriorate (by 2000, social expenditures on health and education had decreased to 3.5 and 2.2 per cent of GNP respectively). Nationally owned companies were privatized, consumer subsidies were discontinued and agricultural support reduced. Public investment dried up and no further social assistance measures were put in place, despite the widely perceived ravages of new poverty. Turkey's rank in human development reports is 85, well below its GDP per capita ranking.

### *Into Europe?*

Perhaps the major determinant of the domestic political scene in recent years has been Turkey's candidacy for the European Union—arguably, the only national project to enjoy popular support. This has not always been the case. In 1987, when Özal first applied for full membership, both the Islamic and the nationalist political forces were staunchly against a closer association with Europe, and what remained of the left had not yet totally outgrown its fascination with third-worldism. Despite the relaxation of statist control over the economy, Turkey's coddled bourgeoisie, fearing the loss of cozy profits from a protected market and state subsidies, was yet far from charting an independent course. In the 1990s, this began to change. A burgeoning urban middle class was growing impatient with official constructions of national identity, as propagated by the authors of the modernization project. Elements within the intelligentsia began to question the basic premises of statist developmentalism. Where previously political debate had been defined along a left-right continuum, the opposition's platform now focused increasingly on civil rights. Candidacy to the European Union became a crucial card to play at this juncture. Aware that they had neither the resources nor the ability to mobilize social forces to defeat the state, opposition groups came to see the candidacy process as the only way of winning support for greater democracy, rule of law and an expanded pluralism, as depicted in the Copenhagen criteria. By the end of the decade, the moderate wings of Islamic and Kurdish movements had joined the ranks of civil-society and human-rights activists advocating rapid fulfilment of the conditions required by Brussels.

The EU had in fact acquired a major presence in Turkey by the late 1990s. Euro-parliamentarians regularly visited areas of conflict, inspected

prisons and gave overt support to human-rights organizations. The EU office in Ankara funded projects with the objective of strengthening civil society; contacts were established through NGO activities, ranging from working with homeless children to sponsoring environmental activists. Official visits served to remind the public that this special relationship continued on course. Almost imperceptibly, the EU had become a player in Turkish politics and public opinion. The country's heretofore insular political scene had been penetrated by new Europe-centred networks into which NGOs, political parties and state agencies found themselves drawn.

In addition, the Istanbul big bourgeoisie now swung their weight behind the EU project. Although Özal's 1987 membership application had met with rebuttal by the Commission—its reply, in 1989, had cited doubts about enlargement as well as the protectionism and imbalances of the Turkish economy—it had instead proposed a free-trade customs union, to come into force from 1995. Initially, the free-trade agreement was met with suspicion by some of Turkey's larger, first-generation industrialists. Having made their fortunes through protectionism, they were wary of unbridled competition. For many of the smaller, export-oriented businessmen, however, the Customs Union not only promised markets but also signalled the hope of keeping the capricious ministries and the planning authority out of their affairs. The struggle over the signing of the agreement was an important threshold, after which the bourgeoisie were left with no choice but to compete in larger markets. Their objectives therefore shifted to rationalization of the economic environment, and to curbing the state's arbitrary prerogatives. By the mid-1990s both TÜSİAD and the new Anatolian bourgeoisie had adopted a platform of democratization and reform, pursuing a relatively consistent programme of economic and political liberalization.<sup>11</sup>

To this end, TÜSİAD invited prominent academics to draft reform proposals to the Constitution, the judiciary and the electoral system; they

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<sup>11</sup> Ziya Onış and Umut Turem, 'Business, Globalization and Democracy: A Comparative Analysis of Turkish Business Associations', *Turkish Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2001. For the history of the relations between Turkey and the EU, see Meltem Müftüler-Bac, *Turkey's relations with a changing Europe*, Manchester 1997; Mehmet Ugur, 'The Anchor-Credibility Problem in EU-Turkey Relations', in Jackie Gower and John Redmond, eds, *Enlarging the European Union*, Aldershot 2000, Birol Yesilada, 'Turkey's Candidacy for EU Membership', *Middle East Journal*, vol. 56, no. 1, 2002.

published position papers on the Kurdish situation, education, human rights and democratization. Although they were less than heroic in defending their positions against displeased representatives of the state, their timid attempts at a belated platform of bourgeois freedoms played an important role in legitimizing discussion on these issues. The salient point in these developments was that both Anatolian and Istanbul businessmen agreed that it was necessary to curb the excessive powers of the state. The lack of political will to introduce radical remedies and the unconcealed enthusiasm for graft had made Ankara an excrescence difficult for them to tolerate.

What made the opposition of the 'civil society' to continuing statist prerogatives possible was that the state elite and establishment politicians never faltered in their professed commitment to the European ideal. At the EU's 1997 'enlargement' summit in Luxemburg, Turkey's candidacy was consigned to deep freeze, but a withdrawal of the application was never mooted. Instead, the governing class seemed satisfied with the stand-off whereby Turkey would be seen as a perpetual supplicant for membership and the EU as a fickle and ultimately disinterested object of desire. This official pro-Europeanism made an appeal to the democratic norms required for EU candidacy a legitimate form of critique—the only one available, in fact, to those advocating greater civil liberties. To call for a rapid fulfillment of the EU conditions was a far safer option than direct confrontation with the formidable powers of the governing elite. Public opinion polls indicated a solid majority, between 65 and 75 per cent, behind this broad coalition of interests—even if this did not reflect a clear understanding of what EU membership would actually entail.

The unexpected development at this juncture was the switch in the EU's stance. In December 1999, two years after the Luxemburg rejection, the EU heads of state at the Helsinki summit meeting agreed to accept Turkey's candidate status. Observers have pointed to a number of factors. In Germany, Schroeder had replaced the more intransigent Kohl in 1998. Öcalan's imprisonment and the PKK surrender had defused the Kurdish issue. The Blair government had campaigned hard for enlargement as an antidote to integration. There was a new rapprochement with Greece, partly as a result of the 'earthquake diplomacy' of 1999. TÜSIAD had been lobbying successfully in Brussels. American support—in particular, Clinton's efforts at the OSCE summit in Istanbul in November 1999—was also seen as instrumental in securing the positive outcome at

Helsinki, although the US's frequent interventions in favour of Turkey's accession have been resented by Brussels, especially since G. W. Bush's presidency. Of course, Turkey had proved a loyal asset in the post-Cold War period, and entry into the EU, it was argued, would help to stabilize Turkey domestically, at no cost to the US and the 'western alliance'.

Nevertheless, the EU's 1999 decision to extend candidate status to Turkey took fractions of the state elite in Ankara by surprise. Having counted on perpetual postponement, they now found that the reforms suddenly demanded of them required significant alterations to their national-security system and its ideological props. The ideal of nation as community would have to yield to rule of law; enforcement of civil and political liberties would strengthen oppositional forces. The cultural rights of the Kurdish minority would have to be recognized, and secularism redefined to allow freedom of religious organization and expression. Perhaps most controversial, the military would have to abdicate its regency over the state. Accordingly, opposition to the European project, especially from the military but also from within the ranks of the bureaucracy and the judiciary, was openly voiced for the first time. Top generals opined that the EU, using the pretext of cultural rights, wanted to divide Turkey along ethnic lines; the far-right Nationalist Action Party, a member of Ecevit's coalition, was mobilized to defend the unitary national structure against European demands. Anti-EU forces pointed out that Turkey's geostrategic centrality meant it could always depend on IMF bail-outs and Washington's support. While the EU had initially been a state project for Turkey's elite, now it had become a platform for those who wanted to rein in the elite authoritarianism of Ankara. Rhetorical entrapment of the statist party served the democratizers well during the debate, however. Very few voices actually went so far as to propose a total rupture with the EU. Official Kemalist discourse would not permit such a jettisoning of the western ideal.

The unease of the military and their extensions in civilian government about the prospects of membership fed on the doubts of the European side. The dialogue between Turkey and the EU always hid more tension than the parties openly admitted to. European elites who aspired to a politically united federation objected to Turkey's membership on the same grounds that De Gaulle had opposed Britain's in the 1960s. Austrian and German Christian Democrats held that Turkey was not European enough, or too Islamic, culturally speaking. Opinion polls

showed only minority support for Turkey's candidacy, though higher in Southern Europe than in the North. Giscard d'Estaing accused other politicians of hypocrisy, declaring that accepting Turkey into the Union would spell the end of Europe.<sup>12</sup> Yet the EU, too, was trapped in its own rhetoric as a 'union of the willing': ostensibly everyone who fulfilled the Copenhagen criteria could join. Hence, negotiations had to be allowed to proceed through the designated channels and bureaucratic momentum took over, with annual progress reports prepared by the Commission.

### *The AKP government*

The pro-EU forces in Turkey were delivered an unexpected breakthrough with the AKP election victory in November 2002. Not only had the party actually promised to work for membership, but it was the only political force not compromised by its relationship with the state elite. Even before the government had been formed, Erdoğan started making the rounds of European capitals to garner support for Turkey's accession negotiations to be scheduled. It was the first time in fifteen years that an Ankara government had been formed by a single party, with a prime minister who could promise to implement reforms without fearing (or hiding behind) sabotage by coalition partners. Over the past eighteen months, the AKP government has worked feverishly to speed through the legislation begun under Ecevit. The prerogatives of the National Security Council have been reduced; it will be expanded to include a majority of civilians, one of whom will be its chairman. In June 2004 the imprisoned Kurdish deputies were finally released and a Kurdish-language programme, 'Our Cultural Riches', broadcast on state-run TRT. Other rights which will go some way toward satisfying the demands of the Kurdish minority may follow. It remains to be seen whether legislation to protect individuals against the coercive organs of the state has any effect on the actual behaviour of the police and courts. Torture and police brutality have long been staples of the Turkish state's relations with the populace, and civilian governments have lacked the courage

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<sup>12</sup> Giscard d'Estaing and Helmut Schmidt co-authored a disapproving op-ed piece after the Helsinki summit where Turkey's candidacy was agreed. Giscard was particularly outspoken in November 2002 when he declared that Turkey was not a European country on account of geography and religion. See 'L'Europe sans frontières', *Le Monde*, November 9, 2002. Generally, Turkey's candidacy has been more popular among the left than the right (Britain is an exception), and in southern European countries more than in the North.

to bring the perpetrators to justice. Appeals by victims to the European Court of Human Rights have provided the only exceptions during the last decade, with the Turkish state ordered to pay damages to some of its own nationals. The AKP government has reiterated that ECHR decisions will be considered as case law by Turkish courts.

Erdogan got a cool response on accession scheduling at the EU's Copenhagen summit in December 2002, at the height of the pre-Iraq War turbulence in trans-Atlantic relations. Turkey's case was postponed for consideration until December 2004. But the past year's insurgency in Iraq, as well as the AKP's confident progress, have led to a different emphasis. In May 2004, the EU's Commissioner for External Affairs, Chris Patten, described the December 2004 European Council vote as 'the main test of the European Union's commitment to a pluralist and inclusive approach to Islam'. In June, the Council announced that it was satisfied with Turkey's democratization and would stop monitoring its progress. Barring some major upset, it seems likely that December 2004 will see Turkey admitted to the EU waiting room, even if it has to remain there for a lengthy period while Brussels manoeuvres into place sufficient opt-outs, multi-tracks and subsidiarity loopholes to differentiate future farming subsidies and restrict the movement of new jobseekers.

Of course, beginning negotiations with the EU for eventual accession will not magically resolve the tensions Turkish social and political life engender. For the moment, the military seem resigned to the smaller role accorded them by Erdogan's skillful manoeuvring, but calls for them to reassume the mantle of vigilant guardianship have not disappeared. The unfolding of the struggle will depend on AKP's success in negotiating the consent of its Islamic base toward a more centrist rule that will also satisfy the secularist establishment and the military. The role the military is likely to play also depends on how much the Turkish army will be committed to new wars and security undertakings planned by the Pentagon. The parliament veto of US troop transits through Turkey to Iraq in March 2003—one third of newly elected AKP deputies disobeyed the party whip to vote with the opposition Republican People's Party—seems unlikely to re-occur. The unheard-of act of Turkish disobedience caused fury in the White House, and Erdogan has been trying hard to compensate ever since. By October 2003, he had managed to convince the AKP ranks to vote in favour of sending troops to support the US-led occupation, using the military's logic that an armed Turkish presence was necessary to

prevent the formation of a Kurdish state. Only the urgent pleas of the Iraqi Governing Council prevented the deployment from taking place. The generals remain as important as ever to Washington, and Erdogan himself committed to appeasing the US. It is not clear that the expanding professional stature of the army may easily be reconciled with a diminishing of its accustomed presence in political affairs—especially if there is a resurgence of Kurdish guerrilla activity within Turkey's borders.

On the fiscal front, the debt burden continues to increase and, even if the AKP succeeds in gradually lowering interest rates, the arithmetic seems unsustainable. The government is unlikely to declare outright bankruptcy in the near future, but once the atmosphere of perpetual crisis dispels, it will have to face growing resentment against austerity and the paucity of budget allocations to social expenditures. While economic recovery has been substantial since the crisis of 2001, Turkey's young and growing population sends a fresh contingent of young workers onto the job market each year, whose prospects in the age of jobless growth are increasingly disappointing. Labour-force restructuring has created a visible polarization in the big cities, which can no longer be remedied by the traditional mechanisms of large families and neighbourhood solidarity. During the 1990s, Kurds fleeing the war or forced out of the eastern and southeastern provinces predominated in the migration to the cities. While earlier arrivals were attracted by job opportunities or better access to education and health services, for the newcomers the decision is more likely to be based on sheer necessity. These displaced migrants have ended up in Istanbul, in shantytowns around Diyarbakir, Adana or Antalya, or in smaller towns along the coast. For most, there is no place to go back to.

The new urban poor have provided a vast pool of votes for the AKP, yet they remain an unpredictable factor. For the time being the AKP still benefits from its relatively clean past record on corruption. Its principal attraction for the urban poor lies not so much in concrete proposals as in its projection of empathy; it also profits from the absence of any alternative political channel for the expression of their discontent. Of the two major parties that claim a 'left' heritage, Ecevit's DSP had become ultra-nationalist and statist before its demise in the 2002 elections. The Republican People's Party, which now forms the parliamentary opposition with 19 per cent of the popular vote, defines itself primarily on the basis of its 'secularism'; accordingly most of its support derives from

the middle-class vote of the more developed regions and the larger cities. As the novelty wears off, the conflict between AKP's policies and the demands of its principal constituency, emboldened by populist rhetoric, will become increasingly tension-ridden. While some formal recognition by the EU of an eventual prospect of membership will provide a definite boost, the future for Washington's 'beacon of democracy in the Muslim world' still remains uncertain.

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BENEDICT ANDERSON

# IN THE WORLD-SHADOW OF BISMARCK AND NOBEL

*José Rizal: Paris, Havana, Barcelona, Berlin—2*

**I**N AN EARLIER article, 'Nitroglycerine in the Pomegranate' in NLR 27, I discussed the novels of Filipino José Rizal—*Noli me Tangere* and, in particular, *El Filibusterismo* (Subversion) of 1891—within a loosely literary framework. I argued that Rizal learnt much from European novelists, yet transformed what he found there to explosive new anticolonial effect. But Rizal was not only the first great novelist but also the founding father of the modern Philippine nation, and did not read merely fiction. He also perused the newspapers and magazines of the various capitals in which he lived—Madrid, Paris, Berlin, London—not to mention non-fiction books. More than that, from very early on his political trajectory was profoundly affected by events in Europe, the Caribbean, and elsewhere, and their often violent local backwash thousands of miles away in his home country. The aims of the present article are twofold. One is to use a transnational space/time framework to try to solve puzzles which have long perplexed critics of Rizal's last published novel. The second is to allow a new global landscape of the late nineteenth century to come into view, from the estranging vantage point of a brilliant young man (who coined the wonderful expression *el demonio de las comparaciones*) from one of its least-known peripheries.<sup>1</sup>

By the time *El Filibusterismo* was published in 1891, Rizal, now thirty, had been in Europe for almost ten years, and had learned the two master-languages of the subcontinent—German and French—as well as some English. He had also lived for extended periods in Paris, Berlin and London.

He subtitled his second major fiction *novela filipina* with good political reason. But it could almost as well be termed *novela mundial*. Bismarck had made Germany the dominant power in Europe, and pioneered a new global German imperialism (alongside several others, of course) in Africa, Asia and Oceania. Alfred Nobel had invented the first WMD readily available to energetic members of the oppressed classes almost anywhere. On the Left, the terrifying defeat of the Commune, the collapse of the First International, and Marx's death had opened the way for the rapid rise of anarchism in various forms, initially in France and Spain, but not much later in other parts of Europe, North America, the Caribbean and South America, as well as the Far East. I shall try to show how this global political context shaped the peculiar narrative of *El Filibusterismo*.

Compared to *Noli Me Tangere*, which has been translated into a good number of languages and is widely known and loved in the Philippines, *El Filibusterismo* is relatively unregarded. At one level, this neglect is easy to understand. The novel has no real hero. Women play no central role, and are barely sketched as characters. The plot and subplots are stories of failure, defeat, and death. The moral tone is darker, the politics more central, and the style more sardonic. One might say that if the Father of the Philippine Nation had not written it, the book would have had few readers up till today. For Filipino intellectuals and scholars it has been a puzzle, not least because they have been distressed by its apparent lack of verisimilitude, its non-correspondence with what is known about Philippine colonial society in the 1880s. The temptation therefore has been to analyse it in terms of its author's 'real-life' ambivalence on 'revolution' and political violence (which will be touched on later). But at least some of these difficulties are reduced if we consider the text as global, no less than local.

### *Shifts in Spain*

In 1833 a dynastic crisis occurred in Spain, which gave rise to two successive civil wars, and haunted the country to the end of the century. In that year the ferociously reactionary Fernando VII—imprisoned and deposed by Napoleon, but restored by the Unholy Alliance in 1814—died, leaving

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<sup>1</sup> I would like here to express my gratitude to Robin Blackburn and his student Evan Daniel, Carol Hau, Ambeth Ocampo, and Megan Thomas for all their help with material and criticism.

the crown to his only child, the three-year old Infanta Isabella, with her Neapolitan mother becoming Regent. Fernando's younger brother Carlos, however, disputed the succession, claiming that the 1830 public abrogation of the Salic law prohibiting women from becoming sovereigns was a manipulation designed to rob him of his inheritance. Raising an army in the ultraconservative North (Navarre, Aragon and the Basque country), he opened a war that lasted the rest of the decade and ended only in an uneasy truce. The Regent and her circle turned, for financial as well as political reasons, to the liberals for support; and, by a measure of far-reaching consequences, as we shall see, expropriated the property of all the powerful monastic Orders. At sixteen, Isabella was married off to the 'effeminate' Duke of Cádiz, and soon became accustomed to finding her pleasures elsewhere. On coming of age, she moved away from her mother's policies, fell under the sway of some ultraconservative clerics, and presided over an increasingly corrupt and ramshackle regime.

In the last months before this regime finally fell, in September 1868, Isabella ordered the deportation of a number of her republican enemies to the Philippines, where they were incarcerated on the fortified island of Corregidor in Manila Bay. In the empire-wide exhilaration that followed her abdication and flight to France, some older well-off, liberal-minded Manileño creoles and *mestizos*, including Antonio María Regidor, José María Basa and Joaquín Pardo de Tavera—later to become good friends of Rizal—organized a public subscription on behalf of the suffering prisoners.<sup>2</sup> In June 1869, the rich and liberal Andalusian General Carlos María de la Torre took over as the new 'Captain-General', and horrified much of the colonial elite by inviting creoles and *mestizos* into his palace to drink to 'Liberty', and strolling about the streets of Manila in everyday clothes. He then proceeded to abolish press censorship, encouraged freedom of speech and assembly, stopped flogging as a punishment in the military, and ended an agrarian revolt in Manila's neighbouring province of Cavite by pardoning the rebels and organizing them into a special police force.<sup>3</sup> The following year, Overseas Minister Segismundo Moret issued decrees putting the ancient Dominican University of Santo Tomás under state control, and encouraging friars to secularize themselves, while assuring them, if they did so, of continued control of their

<sup>2</sup> William Henry Scott, *The Unión Obrera Democrática: First Filipino Trade Union*, Quezon City 1992, pp. 6–7.

<sup>3</sup> Leon Ma. Guerrero, *The First Filipino: A Biography of José Rizal*, Manila 1991, pp. 9–11.

parishes in defiance of their religious superiors.<sup>4</sup> The same exhilaration set off what became a ten-year insurrection in Cuba under the capable leadership of the well-to-do landowner Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, who at one point controlled the eastern half of the island.

But in Madrid, with the decision to install Amadeo of Savoy as the new (unpopular) sovereign, the political winds started to shift. In December 1870, Prime Minister General Juan Prim y Prats, who largely engineered Amadeo's accession, was assassinated; and thus, in April 1871, de la Torre was replaced by the conservative General Rafael de Izquierdo. Moret's decrees were suspended, and the new Captain-General abolished the traditional exemption from *corvée* labour for the Cavite naval shipyard workers. On February 20, 1872, a mutiny broke out in Cavite in which seven Spanish officers were killed. It was quickly suppressed, but Izquierdo followed up by arresting hundreds of creoles and *mestizos*—secular priests, merchants, lawyers, and even members of the colonial administration. Most of these people, including Basa, Regidor and Pardo Tavera, were eventually deported to the Marianas and beyond. But the regime, abetted by some conservative friars, decided to make a terrifying public example of three liberal, secular priests. After a brief kangaroo trial, the creoles José Burgos and Jacinto Zamora, and the aged Chinese *mestizo* Mariano Gómez, were garrotted in the presence of, it is said, forty thousand people. Rizal's beloved elder brother Paciano, who had been living in Burgos's house, was forced to go into hiding and forswear any further formal education.<sup>5</sup>

Six months later, on September 2, almost 1,200 workers in the Cavite shipyards and arsenal went on the first recorded strike in Philippine history. Numerous arrests and interrogations followed, but the regime failed to find an arrestable mastermind, and eventually all were released. William Henry Scott quotes Izquierdo's ruminations on this unpleasant surprise. Since 'more than a thousand men could not share exactly the same thoughts without some machiavellian leadership', the general concluded that 'the International has spread its black wings to cast its nefarious shadow over the most remote lands'. Unlikely as this perhaps sounds, the fact is that the International had only been banned by the Cortes at the end of 1871, and the Bakuninist Madrid section had made

<sup>4</sup> John N. Schumacher, S. J., *The Propaganda Movement, 1880–1895* [rev. ed.], Quezon City 1997, p. 7

<sup>5</sup> Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, pp. 8–9; Guerrero, *First Filipino*, pp. 3–6, 13.

special mention in the maiden issue (January 15, 1870) of its official organ *La Solidaridad*, devoted to arousing the workers of the world, of 'Virgin Oceania and you who inhabit the rich, wide regions of Asia'.<sup>6</sup>

### *Student years*

Many years afterward Rizal wrote that 'Had it not been for 1872, Rizal would now be a Jesuit, and instead of writing *Noli Me Tangere* would have written its opposite'.<sup>7</sup> With Paciano on the blacklist, Rizal's prime family name, Mercado, would have closed for little José any chance of a good education; he was therefore enrolled at the Ateneo under the secondary family name Rizal. In 1891, he dedicated *El Filibusterismo* to the memory of the three martyred priests. When asked, in 1887, by his Austrian friend, the ethnologist Ferdinand Blumentritt, what the meaning was of the odd word *filibustero*, he replied: 'The word *filibustero* is still very little known in the Philippines; the common people still are unaware of it. The first time I heard it [he was then eleven years old] was in 1872 when the executions took place. I still remember the terror it aroused. Our father forbade us ever to utter it . . . [It means] a dangerous Patriot who will soon be hanged, or a presumptuous fellow'.<sup>8</sup> It turns out the word was coined around 1850 on one surprising shore of Céspedes's Caribbean, and from there drifted, via Cuba and Spain, across the Indian Ocean to Manila.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Scott, *Unión Obrera Democrática*, pp. 6–7.

<sup>7</sup> 'Sin 1872, Rizal sería ahora jesuita y en vez de escribir *Noli me tangere*, habría escrito lo contrario'. Rizal's letter to his friend Mariano Ponce and staff members of *La Solidaridad*—1890s organ of the Filipino nationalists in Spain, as quoted in Guerrero, *First Filipino*, p. 608, note 13. My translation.

<sup>8</sup> 'Das Wort Filibuster ist noch auf den Philippinen sehr wenig bekannt worden; die niedrige Bevölkerung kennt es noch nicht. Als ich dieser Wort vom ersten Mal hörte, war es in 1872, wann die Hinrichtungen stattgefunden haben. Ich erinnere mich noch das Erschrecken welches dieser Wort weckte. Unser Vater hat uns verboten dieses Wort auszusprechen . . . [It means] ein gefährlicher Patriote, welches in junger Zeit aufgehängt wird, oder ein eingebildeter Mensch!' *The Rizal–Blumentritt Correspondence*, Vol. 1, 1886–1889, Manila 1992, fifth and sixth unnumbered pages after p. 65. Letter of March 29, 1887, from Berlin. My translation.

<sup>9</sup> F[ernando] Tárrida del Mármol, 'Aux Inquisiteurs d'Espagne', *La Revue Blanche*, vol. 12, no. 86 (1 February 1897), pp. 117–20. On p. 117 he wrote, of the *inquisiteurs modernes* in Spain, that 'their methods are always the same: torture, executions, slanders. If the wretched person whom they mean to destroy lives in Cuba, he is called a filibuster; if he lives in the Peninsula, an anarchist, if in the Philippines, a freemason [leurs procédés sont toujours les mêmes la torture, les exécutions, les calomnies Si le malheureux qu'ils veulent perdre demeure à Cuba, c'est un filibustier, si dans la péninsule, un anarchiste, si aux Philippines, un franc-maçon]' We shall run into the

In the late spring of 1882, the 20-year-old Rizal left his country to study in Spain, concealing his plan from his parents, but supported by his elder brother Paciano and a sympathetic uncle. How was this possible? The Mercados were a cultivated, Spanish and Tagalog-speaking family of mixed 'Malay', Spanish, Chinese, and perhaps even remote Japanese descent. They were the most prosperous family in their town of Calamba (today an hour's drive south of Manila); but their wealth was also fragile, as they did not own much land, but rented it from the huge local Dominican *hacienda*. In 1882 world sugar prices were still high, but would crash in the depression that lasted from 1883 to 1886. The family would always send what money they could to José, but it was never enough, and the youngster was always hard put to make ends meet.

In any case, early in June, Rizal disembarked at Marseilles, before proceeding to Barcelona and on to Madrid to enrol as a student at Central University. The first disagreeable downward shock was, as he wrote to his family, 'I walked along those wide, clean streets, macadamized as in

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redoubtable Tárrida later on. Suffice it here to say that he knew what he was talking about, since he was born in Cuba in 1861—the year also of Rizal's birth—and said of himself in the above article that *je suis cubain*.

In fact it appears that the word in its political, rather than older piratical ('free-booter'), meaning was coined in New Orleans around 1850. The local Francophone creoles and *mestizos* termed *filibustiers* the variegated idealists and mercenaries who joined the Venezuelan Narciso López in that city for three attempted invasions of Cuba (1849–51) to throw off its Spanish yoke. From creole, with its added 's', it must have passed into English and Spanish, since people like the notorious American mercenary William Walker, who made himself briefly president of Nicaragua in the mid-1850s, called themselves filibusters. Most likely, the carriers of the Spanish version to Manila were high-ranking Iberian military officers, many of whom served in the Caribbean before being sent to the Philippines. Four of the last five captain-generals in the archipelago, Valeriano Weyler (1888–91)—born to Prussian parents in Mallorca—Eulogio Despujol (1891–93), Ramón Blanco (1893–96) and Camilo Polavieja (1896–97) had all won their repressive spurs in the Caribbean, Despujol in Santo Domingo, the others in Cuba. Weyler would become world-notorious in the later 1890s when sent to Cuba to suppress the final nationalist insurrection. His policy of forced reconcentration of populations on a vast scale (prefiguring what the Americans did in Luzon in the 1900s) caused hundreds of thousands of deaths. It is a strange historical irony that López, who offered command of his second expedition to both Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee, was notorious for his 'severity' towards Blacks, allied himself with the Southern slavocracy, and recruited men mainly among veterans of the Mexican War, found posthumous 'patriotic' rehabilitation thanks to his public garroting in Havana. The red-white-and-blue, star-and-stripes flag he designed for annexationist purposes remains Cuba's national flag today. See Hugh Thomas, *Cuba, The Pursuit of Freedom*, New Brunswick, NJ 1971, pp. 212–17.

Manila, crowded with people, attracting the attention of everyone; they called me Chinese, Japanese, American [i.e. Latin American], etc., but no one Filipino! Unfortunate country—no one knows a thing about you!<sup>10</sup> In Madrid, he was to be asked by fellow students whether the Philippines was owned by the United Kingdom or by Spain, and another Filipino whether it was very far from Manila.<sup>11</sup> Yet the overwhelming Spanish ignorance of, and indifference to, his country was soon to have useful consequences. In the colony—but the Spanish state never called either the Philippines or Cuba a colony, and contained no Colonial Ministry—racial hierarchy, embedded in law, modes of taxation and sumptuary codes was of overriding importance to everyone. Peninsulars, creoles, Spanish and Chinese *mestizos*, 'Chinese', and *indios* were italicized social strata. In the Philippines, the word *filipino* referred to the creoles alone. In Spain, however, Rizal and his fellow students quickly discovered that these distinctions were either unknown or seen as irrelevant.<sup>12</sup> No matter what their status was back home, here they were all *filipinos*, just as the Latin Americans in Madrid in the late eighteenth century were *americanos*, no matter if they were from Lima or Cartagena, or if they were creoles or of mixed ancestry.<sup>13</sup> (The same process has produced the contemporary American category 'Asians' and 'Asian Americans'.) On April 13, 1887, Rizal would write to Blumentritt that 'All of us have to make sacrifices for political purposes, even if we have no inclination to do so. This is understood by my friends, who publish our newspaper in Madrid; these friends are all youngsters, creoles, *mestizos* and Malays,

<sup>10</sup> 'Yo me paseaba por aquellas calles anchas y limpias adoquinadas como en Manila, llenas de gente, llamando la atención de todo el mundo, quienes me llamaban chino, japonés, americano, etc: ninguno filipino Pobre país! Nadie tiene noticia de tí!' Letter of June 23, 1882 from Barcelona, in *One Hundred Letters of José Rizal*, Manila 1959, p. 26. These letters were not available when the big *Correspondencia Epistolar* was published.

<sup>11</sup> 'Que nos tomen por chinos, americanos o mulatos y muchos aun de los jóvenes estudiantes no saben si Filipinas perteniese a los ingleses o los españoles. Un día preguntaban a uno de nuestros paisanos si Filipinas estaba muy lejos de Manila.' Letter home from Madrid dated January 29, 1883, in *One Hundred Letters*, p. 85.

<sup>12</sup> In the first-class *Avant-Propos* she wrote to her new French translation of *Noli Me Tangere*, Jovita Ventura Castro noted that it was only after 1863 that students from the Philippines were permitted to enrol in metropolitan universities. (The translation, *N'y touchez pas!*, was published in Paris in 1980 by Gallimard with the sponsorship of UNESCO.) The first to enrol were creoles physically indistinguishable from Spain-born Spaniards. Multi-coloured *mestizos* and *indios* seem only to have arrived in the later 1870s. They were thus something visibly quite new.

<sup>13</sup> See my *Imagined Communities*, London 1991, p. 57.

[but] we call ourselves simply Filipinos.<sup>14</sup> What they 'are' (colonially) is contrasted to what they 'call themselves' in the metropole. But there is actually a further elision, since many of these *mestizos* were 'Chinese' not 'Spanish'. (Indeed the Chinese *mestizos* vastly outnumbered their Spanish counterparts in the Philippines.)<sup>15</sup> The political *esfuerzo* involved probably explains why their newspaper called itself hopefully—and unmindful of the International—*La Solidaridad*. Thus one can suggest that Filipino nationalism really had its locational origins in urban Spain rather than in the Philippines.

For the next four years Rizal studied hard at Madrid's Central University. By the summer of 1885, he had received his doctorate in philosophy and letters, and would have done the same in medicine if his money had not run out. After Rizal's execution at the end of 1896, Miguel de Unamuno—who, though three years younger than the Filipino, entered the philosophy and letters faculty two years before him and graduated in 1884—claimed, perhaps truthfully, that he had 'seen him around' during those student days.<sup>16</sup> But for the purpose of this investigation, the most significant event occurred at the beginning of his senior year (1884–85) when Miguel Morayta, his history professor and a leading figure in Spanish Masonry, delivered an inaugural address that was a blistering attack on clerical obscurantism and an aggressive defence of academic freedom.<sup>17</sup> The scholar was promptly excommunicated by the

<sup>14</sup> 'Wir müssen alle der Politik etwas opfern, wenn auch wir keine Lust daran haben. Dies verstehen meine Freunde welche in Madrid unsere Zeitung herausgeben; diese Freunde sind alle Jünglingen, creolen, mestizen und malaien, wir nennen uns nur Philippiner.' See *Rizal–Blumentritt Correspondence, 1886–1889*, p. 72. It is important to recognize that the German word *Philippiner* is uncontaminated by the ambiguities surrounding *filiipino*. It is clearly and simply (proto)national.

<sup>15</sup> It is very striking that the words *mestizo chino* do not occur in *Noli Me Tangere* at all, and only once, in passing, in *El Filibusterismo*. There are plenty of characters whom one can assume are such *mestizos*, but Rizal is careful not to mention their 'give-away' typical surnames. Sadly Iberian prejudices against the Chinese rubbed off rather heavily on the young anticolonial elite.

<sup>16</sup> Mentioned in the Mexican Leopoldo Zea's illuminating introduction to the Venezuelan edition of *Noli Me Tangere*, Caracas 1976, p. xvii, citing Unamuno's 'Epílogo' to W E. Retana, *Vida y Escritos del Dr. José Rizal*, Madrid 1907.

<sup>17</sup> He particularly enraged the hierarchy by insisting that the *Rig Veda* was much older than the Old Testament, and that the Egyptians had pioneered the idea of retribution in the afterlife, and discussing in sceptical terms the Flood, and the Creation which even then Rome insisted had taken place in 4004 BC. Manuel Sarkisyanz, *Rizal and Republican Spain*, Manila 1995, p. 205.

Bishop of Avila and other mitre-wearers for heresy and besmirching Spanish tradition and culture. The students went on a two-month strike on Morayta's behalf, and were quickly supported by fellow students at the big universities in Granada, Valencia, Oviedo, Seville, Valladolid, Zaragoza, and Barcelona.<sup>18</sup> The government then sent the police in, and many students were arrested and/or beaten up. Rizal later recalled that he had only escaped arrest by hiding in Morayta's house, and assuming three different disguises.<sup>19</sup> As we shall see later, this experience, transformed, became a key episode in the plot of *El Filibusterismo*.

There is only one other event from the student years that is here worth underscoring: Rizal's first 'vacation' in Paris in the spring of 1883. We described in 'Nitroglycerine in the Pomegranate' the excited letters he wrote to his family from the French capital. There is nothing remotely comparable for Madrid. Paris was the first geographical-political space which allowed him to see Imperial Spain as profoundly backward—economically, scientifically, industrially, educationally, culturally, and politically.<sup>20</sup> This is one reason why his novels feel so unique among anticolonial fictions written under colonialism. He was in a position to ridicule the colonialists rather than merely to denounce them. He read Eduard Douwes Dekker's *Max Havelaar* only after he had published *Noli Me Tangere*, but one can see at once why he enjoyed the Dutchman's

<sup>18</sup> Rizal, *El Filibusterismo*, end notes, pp. 38–39. The editorial notes add that congratulations and supportive protests came in from students in Bologna, Rome, Pisa, Paris, Lisbon, Coimbra and various places in Germany.

<sup>19</sup> See the animated account Rizal gave his family in a letter of November 26, 1884, in *One Hundred Letters*, pp. 197–200.

<sup>20</sup> According to the 1860 census, most of the adult working population was occupationally distributed as follows: 2,345,000 rural labourers, 1,466,000 small proprietors, 808,000 servants, 665,000 artisans, 333,000 small business-people, 262,000 indigents, 150,000 factory workers, 100,000 in the liberal professions and related occupations, 70,000 'employees' (state functionaries?), 63,000 clergy (including 20,000 women), and 23,000 miners. Jean Bécarud and Gilles Lapouge, *Anarchistes d'Espagne*, Paris 1970, vol. I, pp. 14–15. Forty years later, in 1901, Barcelona alone had 500,000 workers, but half of them were illiterate. See J. Romero Maura, 'Terrorism in Barcelona and Its Impact on Spanish Politics, 1904–1909', *Past and Present* 41 (December 1968), p. 164. Schumacher goes so far as to claim a level of equality in illiteracy between metropole and colony 'unique in the history of colonization'. (In 1900, illiteracy among people over ten years old in Spain was 58.7 per cent; the American-organized census of 1903 showed a figure of 55.5 per cent for the Philippines—this figure takes into account various local languages, Spanish, and American). *The Propaganda Movement*, p. 304, fn. 9.

take-no-prisoners style of satire. In any case, by the time he graduated he had had enough of the metropole, and spent most of the next six years in 'advanced' Northern Europe. There are perhaps parallels with Martí, eight years older than Rizal, who studied in Spain in the mid-1870s, and then left it for good, spending much of the rest of his life in New York.

### *Imperial Europe*

At this point we must temporarily leave 24-year-old Rizal in order to look schematically at the three worlds in which he found himself situated in the 1880s—the time of *Noli Me Tangere*'s publication and the planning of *El Filibusterismo*. One 'big world' was imperial Europe, and its American, Asian, and African peripheries. The central figure was certainly Bismarck. Having routed the armies of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at Königgrätz in 1866, he repeated this triumph in 1870 at Sedan, where Louis Napoleon and 100,000 French troops were forced to surrender. This victory made possible the proclamation, in January 1871—at Versailles, not Berlin—of the new German Empire, and the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. After this, he began to interest himself in competing with Britain and France in extra-European imperial adventures—in East, Southwest and West Africa, in the Far East and in Oceania, particularly Spanish-claimed territories there. (We shall see the impact of this expansion when we return to Rizal, who liked Germany in part because it made Spain so paranoid.) Characteristically, the notorious carving up of Africa among the imperialists in 1878 was performed in Berlin. In dealing with Germany's well-organized working class and socialist party, Bismarck shrewdly combined repression with substantial social legislation. He remained in power till 1890, when the new, erratic Kaiser forced his resignation. *Noli Me Tangere*, a little incongruously, had appeared three years earlier in the imperial Hauptstadt.

In France, Bismarck's triumph at Sedan was followed by a brutal siege of Paris from which the shaky post-Louis Napoleon government had fled to Versailles, to sign there a humiliating armistice and later treaty. In March 1871 the Commune took power in the abandoned city and held it for two months. Then Versailles seized the moment to attack and, in one horrifying week, executed roughly 20,000 Communards or suspected sympathizers, a number higher than those killed in the recent war or during Robespierre's 'Terror' of 1793–94. More than 7,500 were jailed or deported to places like New Caledonia. Thousands of others fled to

Belgium, England, Italy, Spain and the United States. In 1872, stringent laws were passed that ruled out all possibilities of organizing on the left. Not till 1880 was there a general amnesty for exiled and imprisoned Communards. Meantime, the Third Republic found itself strong enough to renew and reinforce Louis Napoleon's imperialist expansion—in Indochina, Africa, and Oceania. Many of France's leading intellectuals and artists had participated in the Commune (Courbet was its quasi-minister of culture, Rimbaud and Pissarro were active propagandists) or were sympathetic to it.<sup>21</sup> The ferocious repression of 1871 and after was probably the key factor in alienating these milieux from the Third Republic and stirring their sympathy for its victims at home and abroad. We shall look more at this development later on.

Sedan also caused the withdrawal of the French garrison in Rome, and its replacement by the forces of the new, increasingly repressive and inefficient Kingdom of Italy. The Papacy, deprived of its temporal power, struck back politico-spiritually with the bizarre doctrine of Papal Infallibility, and threatened excommunication of any Catholic participating in the Kingdom's political institutions. Imperialism of a mediocre sort began in East Africa, while rural misery in the South was so great that between 1887 and 1900, half a million Italians left the country every year. Rizal visited Rome briefly in 1887 but seems not to have noticed anything but antiquities.

On his return to Europe in February 1888 via the Pacific, Rizal made a brief stop in mid-Meiji Japan, and was impressed by its orderliness, energy and ambition, and appalled by the rickshaws. It was gratifying, of course, to see a non-European people protect its independence and make rapid strides towards modernity. Though he spent a short time in Hong Kong, China itself seems to have been off his map. He reached San Francisco at election time, when anti-Asian demagogic was at its height. Enraged by being kept thirteen days on board ship for 'quarantine' purposes—the ship held about 650 Chinese—he hurried across the continent as rapidly as he could. Nothing would be less likely to impress him than the corruption of the Gilded Age, the post-Reconstruction repression of former Black slaves, the brutal anti-miscegenation laws and so on.<sup>22</sup> But he was

<sup>21</sup> See the vivid account and superb analysis in Kristin Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune*, Minneapolis 1988; also James Joll, *The Anarchists*, Cambridge, MA 1980, pp. 148–49.

<sup>22</sup> See the concise account in Guerrero, *First Filipino*, p. 198.

already foreseeing American expansion across the Pacific. He then settled contentedly in London to do research on early Philippine history at the British Museum, and seems to have taken no interest in the gradually growing crisis over Ireland. (Living by Primrose Hill, was he aware that Engels was ensconced just round the corner?)

### *Anarchist stirrings*

But this apparently calm world of conservative political dominance, capital accumulation and global imperialism was at the same time helping to create another kind of world, more directly related to Rizal's fiction. Indeed, already in 1883, he had sensed the direction of things to come:

Europe constantly menaced by a terrifying conflagration; the sceptre of the world slipping from the trembling hands of declining France; the nations of the North preparing to seize it; Russia, over the head of whose emperor hangs the sword of Nihilism, like Damocles in Antiquity, such is Europe the Civilized.<sup>23</sup>

The year Rizal was born, Mikhail Bakunin escaped to Western Europe from Siberia where for a decade he had been serving a life-sentence for his conspiratorial activities against Tsardom in the 1840s. In 1862 Turgenev published *Fathers and Sons*, his masterly study of the outlook and psychology of a certain type of Nihilist. Four years later, a Moscow student named Karakozov attempted to shoot Alexander II, and was hanged with four others in the great public square of Smolensk.<sup>24</sup> That same year Alfred Nobel took out a patent on dynamite, which though based on highly unstable nitroglycerine, was both simple to use, fairly stable, and easily portable. In March 1869 the 22-year-old Sergei Nechayev left Russia and met Bakunin in Geneva, where they co-authored the sensational *Catechism of a Revolutionary*, then returned to Moscow a few months later. Bakunin kept up (strained) relations with the Nihilist

<sup>23</sup> 'Europa amenazada continuamente de una conflagración espantosa, el cetro del mundo que se escapia de las temblorosas manos de la Francia caduca, las naciones del Norte preparándose à recogerlo. Rusia cuya emperador tiene sobre sí la espada de Nihilismo como el antiguo Damocles, esto es Europa la civilizada . . .' Letter home from Madrid, dated October 28, 1883, in *One Hundred Letters*, p. 174. Spain seems not worth mentioning!

<sup>24</sup> For a *tableau vivant*, see Ramón Sempau, *Los Victimarios*, Barcelona 1901, p. 5. For an impressive listing, see Rafael Núñez Florencio, *El Terrorismo Anarquista, 1888–1909*, Madrid 1983, pp. 19–20.

leader despite the notorious murder of a sceptical student follower, later fictionalized by Dostoevsky in *The Possessed*.<sup>25</sup>

Towards the end of the 1870s, by which time the Nihilists had been succeeded by small clusters of Narodniki as the clandestine radical opposition to the autocracy, political assassination, successful and failed, had become quite common in Russia. 1878: in January, Vera Zasulich shot but failed to kill General Fyodor Trepov, military governor of St. Petersburg; in August Sergei Kravchinsky stabbed to death General Mezentsov, head of the Tsar's secret police. 1879: in February, Grigori Goldenberg shot to death the Governor of Kharkov, Prince Dmitri Kropotkin; in April a failed attempt by Alexander Soloviev to kill the Tsar in the same manner; in November Lev Hartmann's abortive try at mining the imperial railway carriage. 1880: Stepan Khalturin's successful blowing up of part of the Imperial Palace—8 dead, 45 wounded. Nobel's invention had now arrived politically. Then on March 1, 1881—15 months before Rizal landed in Marseilles—occurred the spectacular bomb-assassination of the Tsar, by the group calling itself Narodnaya Volya (The People's Will), that reverberated all over Europe.<sup>26</sup> (The assassination of US President Garfield a few months later was barely noticed.)

This particular form of political violence, targeted at heads of state, heads of governments, or powerful ministers, actually had its heyday from the late 1890s to the eve of the Great War, with Russia still setting the pace. There were many failed attempts (including one which cost Lenin's elder brother his life), but the list of successes seems today rather startling. French President Carnot (1894), Prime Minister Cánovas of Spain

<sup>25</sup> The group was characteristically named 'The People's Retribution'. Nечаev fled back to Switzerland, but was extradited in 1873, and sentenced to twenty years in prison. In 1882 he was 'found dead in his cell' à la Baader-Meinhof.

<sup>26</sup> Sempau, *Victimarios*, pp. 66–67; Norman Naimark, *Terrorists and Social Democrats, The Russian Revolutionary Movement under Alexander III*, Cambridge, MA 1983, ch. I; Derek Offord, *The Russian revolutionary movement in the 1880s*, Cambridge 1986, ch. I; and especially David Footman, *Red Prelude* [2nd ed.], London 1968. The first bomb failed to touch the Tsar. Realizing this, a figure whom Sempau names 'Miguel Ivanovich Elnikof', but who was actually Ignatei Grinevitsky, came close enough before throwing a second bomb that he was killed along with his victim. An early suicide bomber, one could say. A valuable feature of Footman's book is a biographical appendix on 55 Narodnaya Volya activists. Thirteen were executed, fourteen died in prison, fourteen more survived imprisonment, eight escaped abroad, four committed suicide during or after their *attentats* and two went to work for the secret police.

(1897), Empress Elizabeth of Austria (1898), King Umberto I of Italy (1900, planned in Paterson, New Jersey), us President McKinley (1901), King Alexander of Serbia and his wife (1903), Russian Interior Minister Count Wenzel von Plehve (1904), Grand Duke Sergei of Russia (1905), King Carlos of Portugal and his son Luiz (1908), Prince Ito of Japan (1909), Russian Prime Minister Stolypin (1911), King George of Greece (1913), and of course Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in 1914. Every major state except Germany and Britain.<sup>27</sup> Almost all the assassins were caught and promptly executed.

The storms of Russia were to have profound effects across Europe. They can be symbolically represented in one generation by Bakunin, who died in 1876, and, in the second, by Prince Pyotr Kropotkin, who escaped from Tsarist prison to western Europe that same year. The word anarchist in its technical-political sense was coined in 1877, and spread rapidly and widely, though it was also obvious that there were several competing and cross-pollinating currents of thought about its aims and methods.<sup>28</sup> Anarchism's emphasis on personal liberty and autonomy, its typical suspicion of hierarchical ('bureaucratic') organization, and its penchant for

<sup>27</sup> In fact there was at least one abortive plot to kill Kaiser Wilhelm I in 1878, 'uncovered' after an explosion at police headquarters in Frankfurt. Its purported 'anarchist' leader, August Reinsdorf, was quickly executed, while police chief Rumpf was assassinated shortly afterward: a murky affair, in which the manipulative hand of Rumpf is quite probable. In the years 1883 to 1885, there were bomb plots in London against the Tower, Victoria Station and the House of Commons. See Núñez Florencio, *El Terrorismo*, p. 18. These 'events' were quickly reflected in Henry James's *Princess Casamassima* (1886), and much later in Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907) and *Under Western Eyes* (1911). Mention should also be made of the May 1882 Fenian assassination of Lord Cavendish, the new Chief Secretary for Ireland, and his undersecretary, though their status was well below of that of the figures mentioned above, and though the Fenians, like the nationalists who killed Franz Ferdinand, were far from being anarchists.

<sup>28</sup> Jean Maitron offers some interesting data in this regard. The single most important theoretical anarchist publication was Jean Grave's *Le Révolté*, first published in safe Geneva in February 1879 with a print run that rose from 1,300 to 2,000 before Grave felt it was possible to relocate it to Paris as *La Révolte* in 1885. By 1894, when it was smashed by the state in the wake of Carnot's assassination, it had a 7,000 print run, with subscribers in France, Algeria, the us, the uk, Switzerland, Belgium, Spain, Holland, Romania, Uruguay, India, Egypt, Guatemala, Brazil, Chile and Argentina. No Russian. Its 'apache' opposite number, Emile Pouget's satirical *Le Père Peignard* ('*Bons bougres, lisez tous les dimanches*') had a comparable 'Atlantic' stretch. See Maitron, *Le Mouvement anarchiste en France*, vol 1: *Dès origines à 1914*, Paris 1975, pp 141–46.

vitriolic rhetoric, made its appeal especially great under political conditions of severe repression by rightwing regimes. Such regimes found it much easier to smash large trade unions and political parties than to keep track of and destroy hundreds of self-generated autonomous *groupuscules*. Anarchist theory was less contemptuous of peasants and rural labour than mainstream Marxism was then inclined to be. One could argue that it was also more viscerally anticlerical. Probably these conditions help to explain why revolutionary anarchism spread most visibly in still heavily peasant, 'Catholic' post-Commune France, Restoration Spain, post-unification Italy, Cuba—and even Gilded Age immigrant-worker America—while prospering much less in Protestant, industrial, semi-democratic Northern Europe.

In any event, at the end of the bleak 1870s there arose in intellectual anarchist circles the concept of 'propaganda by the deed', spectacular violent attacks on reactionary authorities and capitalists, intended both to intimidate the former, and to encourage cowed workers to re-prepare themselves for revolution. Historians tend to mark the beginning of this new phase by the almost comically unsuccessful uprising of April 1877 in Benevento, northeast of Naples, organized by Errico Malatesta, his rich friend Carlo Cafiero (who had earlier bankrolled Bakunin from the safe shores of Lake Maggiore), and Sergei Kravchinsky aka Stepniak, who had earlier joined the Bosnian uprising against the Turks, and would go on—as we have seen—to kill the head of the Tsar's secret police. (The two Italians were acquitted in the cheerful atmosphere created by the young Umberto I's accession to the throne in 1878. The same ambience allowed the young anarchist cook Giovanni Passanante to get off lightly when he narrowly failed to kill the young king with a knife etched with the words 'Long Live the International Republic'.)<sup>29</sup> Two months after the Benevento affair, 'comrade' Andrea Costa, a close collaborator of Malatesta, gave a talk in Geneva theorizing the new 'tactic'. In early August, Paul Brousse published an article in the radical *Bulletin de la Fédération Jurassienne* explaining that words on paper were no longer enough for awakening the *conscience populaire*; the Russians had shown the need to be just as ruthless as the Tsarist regime. Finally, the gentle Kropotkin swung into action in the December 25, 1880 edition of *Le Révolté*, theoretically defining anarchism as 'permanent revolt by means of the spoken word, writing, the dagger, the gun, and dynamite . . . For

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<sup>29</sup> Joll, *The Anarchists*, pp. 102–5.

us everything is good which is outside legality'.<sup>30</sup> It remained only for *Le Drapeau Noir* to publish clandestinely on September 2, 1883 a *Manifeste des Nihilistes Français* in which the claim was made that: 'In the three years of the League's existence, several hundred bourgeois families have paid the fatal tribute, devoured by a mysterious sickness that medicine is powerless to define and to exorcise', while revolutionaries were urged to continue the insinuated campaign of mass poisonings (Rizal had just made his first happy trip to Paris a few months before).<sup>31</sup> These were all signs that some anarchists were thinking about a new kind of violence no longer targeted, *à la russe*, against state leaders, but rather indiscriminately against those regarded as class enemies.

### *Restoration Spain*

We can now turn to Rizal's 'third world', that of Spain and its once-vast Empire. (What was left in the 1880s was only Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, the Marianas and Carolines, Spanish Morocco and the Berlin-acquired, goldless Rio de Oro.) In the nineteenth century, this world was unique in the zigzag of insurrectionary explosions in the metropole and in the colonies. (One will not find anything remotely comparable till after World War II. For France the fuse was laid by Ho Chi Minh's political and Vo Nguyen Giap's military victory at Dien Bien Phu, and set alight by Algeria's FLN revolt—leading to the collapse of the Fourth Republic, De Gaulle's return to power, and the oas's retaliatory terrorism. For Portugal: military failures in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau led to the bloodless coup against Salazarist autocracy in Lisbon in April 1974.) It is worthwhile to consider briefly the main features of this interactive zigzagging, for it was a pattern of which José Rizal was well informed, and by which his thinking was shaped.

In 1808, the odious future Ferdinand VII had organized a military revolt in Aranjuez which accomplished its main aim, the forced abdication of his father Carlos IV. But Napoleon, at the height of his power, took this opportunity to send troops into Spain (occupying Madrid), on the pretext

<sup>30</sup> 'la révolte permanente par la parole, par l'écrit, par le poignard, le fusil, la dynamite . . . Tout est bon pour nous qui n'est pas la légalité'. Maitron, *Le Mouvement*, pp. 77–78.

<sup>31</sup> 'Depuis trois ans que la ligue existe, plusieurs centaines de familles bourgeoises ont payé le fatal tribut, dévorées par un mal mystérieux que la médecine est impuissante à définir et à conjurer'. Maitron, *Le Mouvement*, p. 206

of a major intervention in Portugal. Fernando VII, who had rushed to Bayonne to negotiate legitimization of his succession with the Secretary of the World-Spirit, was immediately imprisoned. Joseph Bonaparte was then put on the Spanish throne. Resistance and rebellion broke out almost simultaneously in Andalusia and in Hidalgo's Mexico. In 1810, a liberal-dominated Cortes met in Cádiz, which produced in 1812 Spain's first constitutional order. The colonies, including the Philippines, were given legislative representation.<sup>32</sup> Napoleon's defeat brought Fernando back to power in Madrid with the full support of the Holy Alliance. In 1814, he refused to recognize the Constitution, inaugurated a new reactionary absolutism and, in spite of a ruined economy, attempted to arrest the American revolutions for whom nationalism and in-Spain-repressed liberalism were the two main principles. Fernando failed completely in continental Spanish America, but held the loyalty of slave-owning peninsulars and creoles in the Spanish Caribbean—out of Bolívar's charismatic orbit, and petrified by the successful slave revolution in Haiti. And the Philippines? The 'Sarrat' revolt of 1815 in the Ilokano-populated northwest corner of Luzon was quickly and violently repressed. In 1820, however, a military revolt in Andalusia, headed by the mayor of Cádiz, forced Fernando briefly to accept a liberal constitutional order. But Castlereagh's London, Metternich's Vienna, Alexander I's Petersburg, and Ferdinand's kinsman in Paris would have none of this. A French military expedition restored autocracy in 1823, the mayor of Cádiz was hanged, drawn and quartered, and hundreds of liberals and republicans were executed, brutally imprisoned or forced to flee for their lives. That same year, and in response to these events in the metropole, occurred the creole-led 'Novales Mutiny' in the colonial military which came within an ace of seizing Manila, and would have done so had it not been betrayed from within.<sup>33</sup>

One can easily detect a comparable conjuncture in the years 1868–74. Isabella's regime was overthrown in September 1868 by a military-civil

<sup>32</sup> The Philippines kept this representation in all subsequent 'constitutional moments', until its rights were abolished—well after the collapse of the South American Empire—in 1837 Rizal told his friend Blumentritt that his maternal grandfather had in fact sat as a Philippine representative in this metropolitan legislature. See letter of November 8, 1888, from London, in *Rizal-Blumentritt Correspondence*, vol. 1, third unnumbered page after p. 268.

<sup>33</sup> D. G. E. Hall. *A History of South-East Asia* [3<sup>rd</sup> ed.], London and New York 1968, p. 721. For details on these commotions, typically organized by creoles, see Sarkisyanz, *Rizal*, pp. 76–79.

coup in which General Prim y Prats, the Machiavellian liberal politician Práxedes Sagasta, and the conspiracy-minded radical republican Ruiz Zorilla were key players. We have already seen the consequences of this 'explosion' in Cuba and the Philippines. But in Spain itself the next six years were ones of extraordinary political turbulence. Prim y Prats's assassination at the end of 1870 doomed the monarchy of Amadeo of Savoy, which led to the proclamation of a Spanish Republic on February 11, 1873. The new regime lasted in reality only eleven months—during which time it experienced four Swiss-style rotating presidents—till the generals moved in (guided behind the scenes by the sly Andalusian conservative politician Antonio Cánovas del Castillo), dissolving the Cortes in January 1874, and restoring the Bourbon monarchy in the person of Alfonso XII at the end of that year. Among the key reasons for this *démarche* was, as one might have surmised, the imminent threat posed by Céspedes's Cuban revolt to the integrity of what was left of the old Spanish empire. Meantime, however, there was an extraordinary Durkheimian effervescence in the Spanish public sphere. Republicans were briefly legal for the first time in living memory. Bakuninian and Marxian radicalism gained their first political footholds, and in the widely popular 'cantonalist' political movement of 1873 for radical decentralization of the polity, many young anarchists and other radicals got their first experience of open, mass politics. (Nor was this the end of the chain of zigzags, as we shall see. Martí's insurrection in Cuba at the beginning of 1895, which also had its antecedents in anarchist Barcelona, encouraged Andrés Bonifacio's revolt in the Philippines in August 1896, helped sentence Rizal to death four months later, and in 1897 led to Cánovas's assassination by a young Italian anarchist.)

With this background we can now consider Restoration Spain as Rizal encountered it at the beginning of the 1880s. Its dominant politician, Cánovas, liked to say that he was a great admirer of British parliamentary government, and proceeded to set up, with the help of Sagasta, a peculiar parody of the Gladstone–Disraeli duumvirate. Schumacher has pithily described a corrupt, cacique-ridden regime which lasted essentially till the end of the century:

[T]he two leaders permitted the entire system to be vitiated through managed elections . . . As more serious crises came to be resolved, each would yield power to the other and the successor government would *then* proceed to manage an election in which a respectable minority of candidates would

be elected with a scattering of outstanding republicans and Carlists to give verisimilitude to the Cortes.<sup>34</sup>

The Spanish Disraeli ruled from 1875–81, 1883–85, 1890–92, and 1895–97, while 'Gladstone' filled the spaces in between. The worst domestic and colonial repressions typically occurred under Cánovas, while timid reforms were usually accomplished under Sagasta.

### *Friar power*

For what follows next, it is crucial to understand Cánovas's policies toward the generally reactionary Spanish Church. In 1836, First Minister Juan Mendizábal had decreed and carried out the expropriation of all the property of the religious Orders in Spain; and during Glorious 1868, Antonio Ortiz, Minister of Gracia y Justicia, had abolished the Orders themselves—in metropolitan Spain. Mendizábal was no Thomas Cromwell: the Orders were 'compensated' by being put on the state's payroll. The clerical properties were put up for auction and, especially in rich rural Andalusia, were snapped up by members of the nobility, high civilian and military officials, and wealthy bourgeois, many of them absentee. Relatively mild Church exploitation was succeeded by ruthless agribusiness methods; hundreds of thousands of peasants lost access to land, and swelled the numbers of paupers, half-starved day-labourers, and the 'bandits' for which the region became famous after 1840. Andalusian Cánovas made no attempt to roll back what Mendizábal had decreed, though he sought and secured strong Church backing against the rising tide of liberalism, masonry, republicanism, socialism and anarchism.<sup>35</sup> (It was he who in 1884 sent the police into Central University at the call of the bishops.) Nor did he restore the independent position of the Orders, who, after all, were directly responsible to Rome not to himself. But there was one striking exception to all these changes—and that was the colonial Philippines.

It had begun centuries earlier, in the time of Felipe II. The conscience of the ageing monarch had been sufficiently stung by the revelations of de las Casas and others of the inhuman depredations of the conquistadors in the Americas that he decided to entrust his last major imperial acquisition

<sup>34</sup> Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, pp. 21–22. My italics.

<sup>35</sup> On Mendizábal and Ortiz, see Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, p. 134, fn. 16. More generally on the consequences of the confiscation of Order properties, especially in Andalusia, see Bécarud and Lapouge, *Anarchistes*, pp. 14–20.

largely to the Orders, who indeed managed the relatively peaceful conversion of the bulk of the local population. The remote Philippines had no 'lay' attractions comparable to Potosí, and so the Orders largely ran the colony, especially outside Manila. In the course of time, especially the Dominicans and Augustinians acquired vast properties both in Manila real-estate and in *hacienda* agriculture. Furthermore, from the start the Orders had insisted on carrying out conversion via the dozens of native languages (only then would conversions be deep and sincere) which they assiduously attempted to learn. This monopoly on linguistic access to the natives gave them enormous power which no secular group shared; fully aware of this, the friars persistently opposed the spread of the Spanish language. Even in Rizal's time, it has been estimated that only about 3 per cent of the population of the archipelago had any command of the metropolitan language, something unique in the Spanish empire (with the partial exception of ex-Jesuit Paraguay). In the nineteenth century the Spanish political class understood this situation very well, and perhaps rightly reckoned that, without the Orders, Spanish rule in the Philippines would collapse. Hence the only Order-controlled seminaries tolerated in Spain after Ortiz's time were there simply to provide new young friars for the Philippines. At the same time many friars, traumatized by their 'defenestration' in Spain, headed off for safety and power on the other side of the world. Thus, in the Cánovas era, friar power was as peculiar to the Philippines as slavery was to Cuba. But (thanks to Sagasta) slavery was finally abolished in 1886, while in Manila (no thanks to Sagasta) friar power was not seriously undermined till the collapse of the whole system in 1898. From another angle, one can see that Filipino anticolonial activists were inevitably faced with a hard choice which was not open to Cubans and Puerto Ricans: to reject Spanish or spread it. We shall see later on how this question shaped the narrative of *El Filibusterismo*.

### *Internationale*

When an alarmed Captain-General Izquierdo had suspected the machinations of the International behind the extraordinary strike of the autumn of 1872, what made the idea plausible to him? After Isabella fled Madrid in September 1868, Bakunin was much quicker off the mark than Marx. He immediately sent his Italian friend, ex-Mazzinist, ex-Garibaldist Giuseppe Fanelli, to Barcelona and Madrid to inform and organize the 'most advanced' local radical activists. In spite of the fact that Fanelli knew no Spanish, he had an instant and powerful impact. The Centro

Federal de las Sociedades Obreras was formed early the following year, and sent two Bakuninist delegates to swell the Russian's majority at the Basle Congress of the International in September.<sup>36</sup> Early in 1870 the Federación Regional Española, the Spanish section of the International, was publishing *La Solidaridad*, and a little later held its first and only Congress in early-industrial Barcelona.<sup>37</sup>

Meantime, Marx's Cuban son-in-law, Paul Lafargue, who had been with the Commune in Paris, but then moved to Bordeaux to widen support for the Parisian insurrectionaries, finally fled across the Pyrenees with his family (his newborn baby died en route).<sup>38</sup> Once settled in Madrid in June 1871, under the alias Pablo Fargas, he followed Marx's instructions to combat the influence of the Bakuninists. But it was pretty late in the day. In December, the Cortes banned the International. During the year or so he was in Spain, he had no luck in Bakuninist Barcelona, but did help start a Marxist group in Madrid. Lafargue was the only pro-Marx 'Spanish' delegate at the disastrous fifth Congress of the International in The Hague in 1872. Not till 1879 was a semi-clandestine Marxist Socialist Party formed and it did not come out of the closet till the rule of Sagasta in the early 1880s. Its organ, *El Obrero*, first appeared in 1882.<sup>39</sup> Many more years would pass before it became a central player in the politics of the Spanish Left. There is no special reason to think that Rizal ever heard of it while a student in Madrid.

<sup>36</sup> The International's first two congresses, held in peaceable Switzerland in 1866 and 1867, had gone ahead quietly enough with Marx in the central position. But Bakunin's influence was already strongly felt at the third congress in Brussels in 1868, and Bakuninists were a majority at the fourth congress in Basle. The fifth congress was supposed to assemble in Paris, but Sedan made this impossible. By the time it was finally held in 1872, in The Hague, it was hopelessly divided. In the year of Bakunin's death it was dissolved, though Bakuninist congresses continued to be held till 1877. See the succinct account in Maitron, *Le Mouvement*, pp. 42–51.

<sup>37</sup> George Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology and the Working Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898*, Berkeley 1989, pp. 14–18; Bécarud and Lapouge, *Anarchistes*, pp. 27–29.

<sup>38</sup> How did a Cuban manage so fine a French name? His grandparents on both sides had been 'French Haitians', and had moved to Cuba to escape Toussaint's revolution. One grandfather (Lafargue) was a small slave-owning planter and the other (Abraham Armagnac) a Jewish merchant. One grandmother was a Haitian mulatta, and the other a Jamaican Caribe. Both Paul and his parents were born in Santiago de Cuba. The family moved back to the grandfather's native Bordeaux in 1851, escaping this time from Cuban rebellion and Spanish repression. Paul carried a Spanish passport, and was bilingual in French and Spanish.

<sup>39</sup> Bécarud and Lapouge, *Anarchistes*, pp. 29–34; David Ortiz, Jr., *Paper Liberals, Press and Politics in Restoration Spain*, Westport, CT 2000, p. 58.

But he was certainly well aware of what developed next, and we shall find traces of this in *El Filibusterismo*. Cánovas's six-year regime of repression was replaced by the milder, more permissive Sagasta in 1881, very soon after the assassination of Alexander II, and after a meeting in London of various anarchists had moved to confirm the necessity of violent 'propaganda by the deed'. The change of government in Spain allowed the FRE top leadership, mostly Catalan, to believe the way was now open for wider, and legal, organizing of the working class, and in September it replaced the FRE by the FTRE (Federación de Trabajadores de la Región Española). Since this policy diverged from the radical resolutions approved in London, they did what they could to keep these decisions under wraps. But the news leaked out anyway. In spite of a spectacular increase in its affiliated membership—58,000 people in one year—tension grew quickly between the 'legalists' in industrial Barcelona and the radicals with their base in rural Andalusia. At the 1882 Congress in Seville, most of the Andalusians broke away to form a group they called The Disinherited (*Los Desheredados*). 1883 was a difficult year in any case. A world-wide depression had set in, with especially severe consequences in Andalusia, where hunger and immiseration grew rapidly. Furthermore, Cánovas returned to power. A new wave of rural arson and robbery spread all over the Prime Minister's home region, causing real panic in many places.<sup>40</sup> The police arrested and tortured hundreds of people, anarchists, peasants and bandits, claiming shortly thereafter to have uncovered a vast secret insurrectionary conspiracy called La Mano Negra [Black Hand].<sup>41</sup> Far from offering its support, the FTRE, hoping to avoid repression, firmly disassociated itself from what it termed criminal activities. This stance did not help, and the organization declined steadily till its dissolution in 1888.<sup>42</sup> We shall see that the spectre of La Mano Negra and the Andalusian panic are reflected in the latter half of *El Filibusterismo*.

<sup>40</sup> According to Bécarud and Lapouge, *Anarchistes*, p. 36, an earlier such wave had occurred in 1878–80.

<sup>41</sup> Ramón Sempau observed that now 'se renovaron prácticas olvidadas'—'forgotten practices [i.e. of the Inquisition era] were renewed'. *Los Victimarios*, p. 275. Two famous Spanish novels, published a quarter of a century later under a liberalized regime, afford fine evocations of the 'undergrounds' of Barcelona and Andalusia in this period. Pío Baroja's *Aurora Roja* [Red Dawn] and Vicente Blasco Ibáñez's *La Bodega* [The Cellar], both originally published in Madrid in 1905.

<sup>42</sup> See the succinct account of these developments in Núñez Florencio, *El Terrorismo*, pp. 38–42.

### *Rizal's homecoming*

Sagasta returned to power in 1885, and held it until 1890. It was this government that finally abolished slavery in Cuba, enacted a rather liberal law on associations which allowed radicals to start organizing legally once again, and substantially expanded press freedom. It even made some serious attempts at reforms in the Philippines. In 1887 the Spanish Penal Code was extended to the archipelago, followed in 1889 by a similar extension of the Spanish Code of Commerce, the law on administrative litigation, and the Civil Code, except with regard to marriage (the Church in the Philippines bitterly insisted on this). But it was exactly in July 1885 that Rizal left Spain more or less for good, proceeding to France and Germany, and busying himself with further medical studies and with the completion of his first novel. When it was published in the spring of 1887, he decided the time had come to return to the Philippines. He went to Austria to meet for the first and last time his favourite correspondent Blumentritt, toured Switzerland, visited Rome, and sailed for Southeast Asia from Marseilles, arriving home on August 5. (But he left again for Europe only six months later.)

On coming to power for the second time, Sagasta had appointed a new, relatively moderate Captain-General in the Philippines, Lt. Gen. Emilio Terrero y Perinat, who in turn relied heavily on two capable anticlerical subordinates, both of them Masons: the civil governor of Manila, José Centeno García, a mining engineer with republican sympathies, and an unusual twenty years of experience in the Philippines, and the director-general of civil administration, Benigno Quiroga López Ballesteros, a younger man who had once been a liberal deputy in the Cortes. (Centeno would appear, unnamed but honored, in *El Filibusterismo*.) The two men vigorously enforced laws which took municipal justice away from the mayors and gave them to new justices of the peace, and likewise reassigned the provincial governors' judicial powers to judges of the first instance. The intended effect of both measures was to cut back the power of the friars, who had traditionally held undisputed sway over local government via local executives.<sup>43</sup>

News of *Noli Me Tangere* (and a few copies) had preceded Rizal's return home, and he found himself a famous, or infamous man. The Orders

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<sup>43</sup> Compare Guerrero, *First Filipino*, pp. 178–80, with Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, pp. 109–14.

and the Archbishop of Manila demanded that the book be prohibited as heretical, subversive and slanderous, and the author suitably punished. But, perhaps to his own surprise, Rizal was summoned to a tête-à-tête with Terrero himself, who said he wanted to read the novel, and asked for a copy. We do not know what the Captain-General thought of it, but the novel was not banned under his rule.<sup>44</sup> After a few days in Manila, Rizal returned home to Calamba to be with his family, and open a medical practice. Then his many enemies went to work. In a letter to Blumentritt of September 5, 1887 he wrote: 'I get threats every day . . . My father never lets me go for a walk alone, or dine with another family. The Old Man is terrified and trembles. People take me for a German spy or agent; they say I am an agent of Bismarck, a Protestant, a Freemason, a sorcerer, a half-damned soul, etc. So I stay at home.'<sup>45</sup>

Worse was to follow. As noted earlier, Rizal's family wealth rested on the extensive lands it leased from the local Dominican *hacienda*. From the time of the 1883–86 depression the friars had started raising rents steeply, even as world sugar prices collapsed. Furthermore they appropriated other lands to which, the townspeople felt, they had no just claim. About the time that Rizal returned, various tenants, including relatives of Rizal, stopped paying rent, and appealed to Manila to intervene on their behalf. Suspecting that the Dominicans were cheating on their taxes, Terrero sent a commission to investigate, but then did nothing. At this point the friars went on the attack by getting court orders for evictions. Rizal's family was deliberately chosen as the main target. Both sides went up the legal hierarchy over the next four years, even to the Supreme Court in Spain, but unsurprisingly the Dominicans prevailed.

<sup>44</sup> Guerrero, *First Filipino*, p. 180.

<sup>45</sup> 'man droht mich jeden Tag . . . Mein Vater lässt mich nie allein spazieren, noch bei einer anderen Familie essen; der Alte fürchtet und zittert. Man hält mich für einen deutschen Espion oder Agent, man sagt ich sei Bismarck Agent, Protestant, Freemason, Zauberer, Halbverdammte Seele u.s.w. Darum bleibe ich zu Hause.' *Rizal-Blumentritt Correspondence*, Vol. 1, fifth unnumbered page following p. 133. Bismarck was an ogre for clerical circles because of his decade-long Kulturkampf of the 1870s, intended to coerce German Catholics into giving their first loyalty to the Reich. (It was partly his reaction to the promulgation of Papal Infallibility.) But there was also wider fear of his designs on Spanish Oceania. It seems that in 1885 the Reichskanzler had announced that the imperial navy would ensure the safety of German entrepreneurs in the Carolines. Spanish troops were sent off hurriedly to put down resistance there to the full imposition of Madrid's sovereignty. In *El Filibusterismo*, the nice student Isagani expresses his strong sympathy with the *insulares*. (Ch. xxiv, 'Sueños [Dreams]').

In the meantime members of Rizal's family were evicted from their homes, and other recalcitrant townspeople were soon treated the same way. By then Rizal himself had been advised by everyone to leave the country, since he was suspected of masterminding the resistance.

In early 1888 Terrero's term was up, and the Sagasta government, under heavy political pressure from conservatives at home and in the colony, made the fateful decision to appoint in his stead General Valeriano Weyler, a man with a reputation for 'severity' from Havana—and later, in the middle 1890s, to become world-notorious as the 'Butcher of Cuba'.<sup>46</sup> Terrero's liberal advisers were quickly dismissed or transferred. In 1891 Weyler would be the man who finally 'solved' the problem of tenant recalcitrance in Calamba by sending in a detachment of artillerymen to burn several houses to the ground, and forcibly clear lots 'illegally' occupied. In *El Filibusterismo* Weyler appears, unnamed, as the central target of Simoun's jewelled-pomegranate bomb. It is not surprising then that Rizal delayed his final return to the Philippines until after the general's term was over.

### *The making of a filibustero*

Rizal's decision to live in London on his return to Europe was spurred by the priceless research collection of the British Museum. From newspapers and journals he was perfectly aware of the rising tide of nationalism within the dynastic empires of Europe, to say nothing of Cuba, the

<sup>46</sup> Weyler (b. 1838) spent almost all of the first ten years (1863–73) of his career in the Caribbean. It will be recalled that the First Dominican Republic had successfully broken away from Haiti in 1844, but in 1861, at President Pedro Santana's initiative, had been taken back into the Spanish Empire. In 1863 a popular revolt broke out—aided by Haiti—against this 'treason'. Weyler was among the first young officers to be sent from Cuba to crush the insurrection. Pressured by the US, and by military reverses, Madrid was forced two years later to withdraw its troops and recognize the Second Dominican Republic. Weyler made his reputation as an outstanding officer (he was the youngest man of his time to achieve general rank) by his successes against the Céspedes revolt in Cuba. He earned the soubriquet *el sanguinario* by his leadership of ruthless 'hunter' (*cazadores*) units of lumpen or criminal volunteers. Even a fervent admirer concedes that he killed more prisoners than any other Spanish officer. On his return to Madrid, he was assigned the task of smashing the Carlist forces in Valencia, and accomplished it successfully—without Cuban-style methods. See the hilarious *franquista* hagiography by General Hilario Martín Jiménez, *Valeriano Weyler, De Su Vida y Personalidad, 1838–1930*, Santa Cruz de Tenerife 1998, chs. 2–6, and especially on dead prisoners p. 247.

Ottoman Empire, and the East. Central to all these nationalisms' articulation were the efforts of folklorists, historians, lexicographers, poets, novelists and musicians to resurrect glorious pasts behind humiliating presents and, especially through replacing imperial languages by local vernaculars, to build and consolidate national identities. He had never forgotten the early shock of being misrecognized as a Chinese, Japanese or *americano*, and of realizing that his country was basically unknown in Europe. Furthermore, he was aware that unlike, for example, Malaya, Burma, India, Ceylon, Cambodia and Vietnam, no precolonial written records in his country had survived European conquest. Such Philippine history as existed was the product of members of the Orders or, later, of racist Spanish conservatives. His concern in this regard was also rivalrously stimulated by the somewhat older Isabolo de los Reyes, whose landmark *El Folk-Lore Filipino* had surprisingly won a prize at the Madrid Exposition of 1887.<sup>47</sup> In the British Museum he found what he was looking for, a very rare copy of *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* of Dr Antonio de Morga, published in Mexico in 1609. (Morga had arrived in the Philippines in 1595 at the age of thirty-four, to take the positions of Justice of the Audiencia in Manila, and lieutenant-governor. He was a rarity in his time, an austere honest colonial official whose realistic outlook was not clouded by clerical prejudices.) After laboriously copying out this book by hand, Rizal decided to get it republished with extensive annotations and commentaries of his own, most of which were designed, by comparison with clerical chronicles, to show the reliability of Morga's generally favourable account of native society—its level of civilization, its peaceful productivity and its commercial relations with China, Japan and parts of Southeast Asia. He managed to publish the book with Garnier in Paris, officially in 1890, but in fact late in 1889.<sup>48</sup>

Though Rizal's Morga was not widely read then, or later, it clearly represents a turning point in his own political trajectory. He was becoming a *filibustero*, a patriot determined one way or the other on his country's full independence. (As we shall see, *El Filibusterismo* shows this new stance extremely clearly.) One consequence—given the prestige he

<sup>47</sup> On this fascinating and pioneering work, see my 'The Rooster's Egg', NLR 2, March–April 2000. We shall see a lot of Isabolo later on, in Part III.

<sup>48</sup> In his *First Filipino*, Guerrero has a lengthy and interesting discussion both of Morga's original and of Rizal's annotations (pp. 205–23). It has to be said that some of Rizal's closest friends, such as Blumentritt and the painter Juan Luna, privately suggested to him that his patriotism had led him into exaggerations. De los Reyes was politely critical on the same grounds in public.

had won among Filipinos by *Noli Me Tangere* and a spate of powerfully written articles published in various republican newspapers in Spain—was a growing schism within the overseas Filipino community in the metropole. Even during his student days in Spain, Rizal had frequently criticized his fellow-countrymen there for frivolity, womanizing, idleness, gossip-mongering, drunkenness and the like. Although he retained a number of close friends there, his years away in Northern Europe had deepened his irritation and sense of alienation.

Yet there was an interesting moment of partial reconvergence. At the end of 1888 a group of the more serious Filipinos there decided to take advantage of Sagasta's 1887 law liberalizing political space to form themselves into an energetic new political organization and to publish their own journal, to be called *La Solidaridad*. Barcelona's atmosphere was a significant element in these decisions. The influential anarchist journal *La Acracia* had already started publication in Barcelona, at the same time that in Madrid Pablo Iglesias's (Marxist) Socialist Party put out *El Socialista*. In 1887, Barcelona's anarchists finally had their own successful daily, *El Productor*.<sup>49</sup> Republican and anarchist organizations were proliferating along with many others. The Filipino initiatives were focused by the arrival in January 1889 of Marcelo del Pilar, the most capable Filipino politician of his generation. Del Pilar's elder brother, a native priest, had been arrested and deported to the Marianas in Izquierdo's repression of 1872, and Marcelo was an agile anti-friar and nationalist organizer

<sup>49</sup> See Ortiz, *Paper Liberals*, pp. 57–60. Ortiz comments that these productions, as well as the later *La Revista Blanca*, showed that the lively anarchist press 'surpassed the socialist press in intellectual rigour, circulation, and longevity'. He also points out the massive new popularity of reading clubs where—given the widespread illiteracy of Barcelona's working class—'readers' (*lectores*) read out loud from the press. It is quite remarkable that two *El Productor*s appeared in the same year, one in Barcelona, and the other in Havana under the chief editorship of the energetic Catalan anarchist Enrique Roig y San Martín, whose Círculo de Trabajadores also issued a bimonthly Bakuninist magazine called *Hijos del Mundo*. I owe this information to an unpublished paper 'Leaves of Change: Cuban Tobacco Workers and the Struggle against Slavery and Spanish Imperial Rule, 1880s–1890s', by Evan Daniel (2003), at pp. 23–24. My thanks to Robin Blackburn (and Evan Daniel) for allowing me to read it. Daniel says that the Havana *El Productor* regularly reprinted articles from Barcelona's *La Acracia* (as well as translations from *Le Révolté* and other non-Spanish anarchist periodicals), but does not mention its Barcelona twin, which is puzzling. Daniel also emphasizes the enormous importance of *lectores* for the many illiterate tobacco-workers. All of this offers a striking contrast between Havana and Manila in this period: a vigorous and legal anarchist press could flourish in Cuba, while nothing remotely comparable would ever have been tolerated in the Philippines.

under the permissive rule of Terrero, Centeno and Quiroga. But after Weyler's arrival he knew he was a marked man, and so escaped to Spain. He immediately took over leadership of the Filipino activists and their new journal, eventually moving it to Madrid to be closer to the centre of state power. From then on, till his miserable, poverty-stricken death in Barcelona in July 1896, he never left Spain.

While Del Pilar's goal was certainly eventual Philippine independence, and while he actively promoted close ties with Manila and encouraged organizing there, he was convinced that the necessary first major steps had to be taken in Spain itself. 'Liberal' cabinets, along with liberal and republican members of the Cortes, had to be lobbied by every means available to create the institutional spaces in which independence could eventually be achieved—while concealing this ultimate goal as much as possible. The tactical steps that had to be taken were basically to catch up with Cuba, via a programme of assimilation. Cuba had representation in the Cortes but the Philippines, as we have seen, had lost this right in 1837. After the abolition of slavery in 1886, Cuba had basically the same legal system as Spain. The Caribbean colony was Spanish-speaking, its educational system was basically secular and state-provided, and the Church's political power was relatively low. Though Del Pilar was an accomplished writer in Tagalog (more so than Rizal, in fact), and though he privately discussed language-policy in a future independent Philippines, he was sure that at this stage only assimilation and hispanicization would create the political atmosphere in which Madrid would permit the Philippines to assume Cuba's political status. Pushing through a serious state-sponsored Spanish-language educational system in the Philippines would also have the effect of destroying the foundations of the Orders' peculiar dominance in his country.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Schumacher's *Propaganda Movement* provides an astute and generally sympathetic account of Del Pilar's life, ideas, goals, and political activities. The paragraph above is a wholly inadequate micro-version of his argument. This may be the place to say something brief about Cuban–Filipino contacts in Spain, such as they were. A good many Filipinos who became Masons in the metropole joined lodges largely composed of Cubans, probably because the Cubans were more friendly and welcoming than the Spaniards. Rafael Labra, a senior creole Cuban member of the republican group in the Cortes (sitting for Puerto Rico and Asturias), with a strong autonomist programme, was not only intellectually influential through his voluminous writings on colonial questions, but also regularly attended and spoke at 'political banquets' organized by Filipino activists. He had earlier headed the first abolitionist movement in Spain—in the 1860s! (Thomas, *Cuba*, p. 240.) Beyond this, the ties

Though utterly different in temperament and talent, Rizal and Del Pilar respected one another, and for a time Rizal wrote energetically for the new journal. But fairly soon, partly as the result of intrigues and jealousies among the lesser activists, they grew apart. After February 1891 Rizal announced that he would write no more for *La Solidaridad*, though he would always give it his moral support. The novelist was increasingly certain that the whole assimilationist campaign was futile. Politically, Cuban representation in the Cortes was meaningless under the corrupt Cánovas–Sagasta electoral system. It had not stopped Spain from continued merciless exploitation of Cuban production through manipulated tariffs, monopolies and subjection to Basque and Catalan business interests. So dissatisfied with 'assimilation' was Cuba, in fact, that, exactly as Madrid feared, the demand was now for autonomy—home rule in effect, heading in the direction of that independence which most of Spanish America had achieved more than half a century earlier. Besides, Rizal believed, there was no chance whatever, at the end of the nineteenth century, of turning millions of Filipinos into assimilated Spanish-speakers. Sagasta's sending the brutal Weyler to Manila in 1888, and his own replacement by Cánovas in 1890, further deepened Rizal's conviction that nothing could be successfully achieved in Spain. The work of emancipation would have to be done back home.

It was in this frame of mind that he moved to Belgium where the cost of living better fitted his meagre resources, and where printing was said to be cheaper than in the surrounding big states. There he worked on *El Filibusterismo*, seeing it frantically through press in August 1891, after which he immediately headed home. If *Noli Me Tangere* was targeted at multiple audiences in Europe and the Philippines, *El Filibusterismo* was meant only for the latter. He sent a few copies to personal friends in Spain and elsewhere, but the rest of the entire edition was shipped to Hong Kong, where he intended to settle till Weyler's term was over. To his trusted older friend Basa, one of the deported victims of Izquierdo twenty years earlier who had settled in Hong Kong and become a successful businessman (and agile smuggler), he wrote an important letter from Ghent on July 9 entrusting the books to him, and urging complete

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seem to have been rather minimal. Cuba's political status was far in advance of that of the Philippines, its representatives in Spain were more likely to be peninsulars and creoles (rather than *mestizos* or 'natives'), and the problems of the two colonies were very different. I know of no Cuban who ever visited the Spanish Philippines, and no more than one or two Filipinos who, in the late colonial period, had seen Cuba at first hand.

secrecy in the face of clerical espionage which also stretched into the British colony. The letter is very bitter about his own extreme poverty, and the endless broken promises of financial help from rich members of the Filipino community in Spain:

I am tired of trusting in our fellow countrymen; they all seem to have joined hands to embitter my life . . . Ah! I tell you [frankly], that if it were not for you, if it were not that I believe that there are still [some] genuinely good Filipinos, I would readily send fellow countrymen and all to the devil! What do they take me for? Exactly at the moment when one needs to keep one's spirit tranquil and one's imagination free, they come at one with intrigues and petty meannesses!<sup>51</sup>

### *A missing library?*

After this too-extended historical background, we can now reconsider some of the puzzles that face the reader of Rizal's second novel, especially its apparently proleptic aspects. But before doing so, one serious investigative difficulty needs brief discussion. If one considers what books Rizal had in his library in the Philippines, what is plain is that there are no volumes by political thinkers after the time of Voltaire, Rousseau and Herder, unless we include Herbert Spencer. Rizal's vast published correspondence shows the same pattern. No mention of Constant, Tocqueville, Comte, Saint-Simon, Fourier, Bentham, Mill, Marx, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Hegel or Fichte—only one-sentence casual allusions to Proudhon and Tolstoy. It is true that Rizal was a novelist, poet and moralist more than a political analyst, but it is hard to believe that over the almost ten years he spent in Madrid, Paris, London and Berlin, he managed to avoid or ignore all these influential thinkers. There is, so far, only one direct clue—a letter written to him in Brussels by his close friend in Paris, Juan Luna. In this letter, the painter reported that he had been reading with great interest a book by the Belgian polymath and renowned bimetallic political economist Emile de Laveleye (1822–92):

I have been reading *Le Socialisme contemporain* by E de Laveleye, which is a compilation of the theories of Karl Marx, Lassalle, etc., Catholic

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<sup>51</sup> 'Estoy cansado ya de creer en nuestros paisanos; todos parece que se han unido por amargarme la vida . . . Ah! Le digo a V., que si no fuera por V., si no fuera porque creo que hay todavía verdaderos buenos filipinos, me dan ganas de enviar al diablo paisanos y todo! Por quién me han tomado? Precisamente, cuando uno necesita tener su espíritu tranquilo y su imaginación libre, venirle á uno con engaños y mezquindades!' *Epistolario Rizalino*, vol. 3 (1890–92), ed. Teodoro M. Kalaw, Manila 1935, pp. 200–01.

socialism, conservative, evangelical, etc I find these most interesting, but what I would like is a book which would place in high relief the miseries of contemporary society, a kind of Divine Comedy, a Dante who would walk through the workshops (*talleres*) where one can hardly breathe and where he would see men, kids (*chiquillos*) and women in the most wretched conditions imaginable.<sup>32</sup>

Luna refers to Marx and Lassalle without further explanation, meaning that he knew Rizal needed none. Another possible clue is an article published in Madrid in January 1890 by Vicente Barrantes, a former high official in Manila, and now a self-proclaimed 'expert' on the Philippines. (Barrantes probably recognized himself in *Noli Me Tangere*'s portrait of a senior civil servant who throws well-off *mestizos* and *indios* into prison to extort money from them.) After describing the Austrian Blumentritt as an agent of Bismarck's 'reptile fund', he denounced Rizal as 'anti-Catholic, Protestant, socialist and Proudhonian'.<sup>33</sup> So? The absence of political books in his Calamba home can easily be understood. After the publication of *Noli Me Tangere*, the novelist was a marked man in the Philippines. Censorship was typically strict, and the presence of such books (necessarily smuggled) in the event of a search by the regime would endanger his entire clan. Fear of the authorities also probably explains the personal, and often anodyne, character of his letters home after he left Spain in 1885. The void in his other correspondence can perhaps partly be explained along similar lines. We know that many of the recipients of his letters, even in Europe, burned them after his arrest in Manila on his return there in 1892. He himself was in his own way a secretive person, usually distrustful except of his family and closest friends.

<sup>32</sup> Letter of May 13, 1891, in *Cartas Entre Rizal y Sus Colegas de la Propaganda*, Manila 1981, Tomo II, Libro 3, Parte 2a, p. 660. My rough translation. Many thanks to Ambeth Ocampo for sending me the text.

<sup>33</sup> The article appeared in the laughably titled *La España Moderna* on January 2. Rizal published a scorching reply in *La Solidaridad* in February, and in a March 6 letter to Blumentritt remarked: '[If he dies of rage at my reply] this would be a great loss for my menagerie. He is one the finest specimens in my [collection of] snakes and hippopotami [es wäre eine grosse Verlust in meiner Menagerie, er ist einer der schönsten Exemplaren meines Schlangen und Hippopotames]'. *Rizal-Blumentritt Correspondence*, vol. 2 (1890–1896), third unnumbered page after p. 336. 'Proudhonian' probably was intended to belittle Rizal as a mere acolyte of the admirable Catalan democrat and federalist republican Francisco Pi y Margall, who had published a translation of Proudhon's *Du principe fédératif* in 1868. Though Pi y Margall was almost forty years older than Rizal, he was a close friend, and a public supporter of the Filipinos. See Sarkisyanz, *Rizal*, p. 112, and ch. 8 (devoted to the two men's relationship).

Returning to *El Filibusterismo*, the novel seems to be set in the time of Weyler (March 1888 to April 1891). The oafish, brutal and cynical 'Su Excelencia' is clearly modelled on the future Butcher of Cuba,<sup>54</sup> while the unnamed, liberal-minded, pro-native High Official who opposes the Captain-General and is dismissed for his pains, is a thinly veiled portrait of Manila civil governor Centeno. This temporal placement is even more sharply confirmed by one of the smaller subplots, which introduces the reader to the melancholy story of the family of the honest peasant Tales. This man clears and works a small piece of land on the wooded confines of Ibarra-Simoun's home township San Diego (modelled after Rizal's hometown Calamba).<sup>55</sup> As he prosters, agents of the nearby *hacienda* of an unnamed Order inform him that the land falls within the *hacienda*'s legal boundaries, but he may stay on if he pays a small rent. Each year thereafter the rents are steeply raised, till Tales refuses to pay any more; threatened with eviction, he refuses to budge, and arms himself to defend his property. Meantime he loses all his money in a vain attempt to win his rights in court. Finally he is captured by bandits and held for ransom. By the time the ransom is finally paid, he returns to find his property taken over by the *hacienda* and a new tenant in place. That night the new tenant, his wife, and the friar in charge of rents are brutally murdered, with the name Tales smeared in blood on their bodies.

At this point something quite extraordinary happens. The Narrator suddenly says: 'Be calm, peaceful inhabitants of Calamba! Not one of you is called Tales, not one of you has committed the crime! You are called [a list of names follows, ending with] Silvestre Ubaldo, Manuel Hidalgo,

<sup>54</sup> In the final chapter of *El Filibusterismo* (at p. 281) Simoun describes how, as Ibarra, he fled secretly from the Philippines with ancestral valuables, and devoted himself to the trade in gems. Then: 'He took part in the Cuban war, aiding now this side, now that, but always making a profit. It was there that he got to know the General, then a major, whose will he first captured by financial advances, later making him a friend thanks to secret crimes to which the jeweller was privy [Tomó parte en la guerra de Cuba, ayudando ya á un partido ya á otro, pero ganando siempre. allí conoció al General, entonces comandante, cuya voluntad se captó primero por medio de adelantes de dinero y haciéndose su amigo despues gracias á crímenes cuyo secreta el joyero poseía]'. Weyler became a major in Cuba in March 1863. What these 'secret crimes' amount to is unclear—cruelties, corruption, or libertinage? A curious section of Martín Jiménez's hagiography discusses the general's ruthless and voracious sexual appetites. Of a married woman with whom he had a secret affair while boss of Cuba, Weyler himself noted: 'The woman pleased me so much that if a rebel battalion had tried to block our assignations, I would have tried to reach her even if a forest of bayonets stood in my way.' *Valeriano Weyler*, pp. 256–57.

<sup>55</sup> Chapter iv ('Cabesang Tales') and x ('Riqueza y Miseria' [Riches and Destitution]).

Paciano Mercado, you are called the entire people of Calamba!'<sup>56</sup> Ubaldo and Hidalgo were Rizal's brothers-in-law, while Paciano was his elder brother. All were severely punished for resisting the Dominicans in 1888–90. And 'San Diego' is calmly unmasked as 'Kalamba'.<sup>57</sup> Later in the novel, we learn that Tales joins the bandits, and after his daughter Julí's suicide to escape Father Camorra's lust, allies himself with Simoun, and finally becomes Matanglawin ('Hawk-eye'), the uncaught bandit chief who terrorizes the whole countryside around Manila. Historically, there seems to have been no figure like Matanglawin in the Philippines of that time, though there were plenty of small bandits in the hilly country to the south of the colonial capital. But were there perhaps one or two in the violent, hungry Andalusia of Rizal's student days?

### *Transpositions*

The main subplot of *El Filibusterismo* is, as mentioned earlier, the ultimately unsuccessful campaign of the students to have the state establish an academy for (lay) instruction in the Spanish language—the first step towards the hispanicization of the population. In historical fact, there was never any such student campaign in Manila, and in any case Weyler would not have tolerated it for a moment. But the subplot is visibly a satirical microcosmic version of the tactical assimilation campaign conducted by Del Pilar in Spain from 1889 onward—in which Rizal had lost all faith. The detailed picture of the students seems completely unlike the one we can gain from other sources of the high school and college world Rizal experienced in Manila in the late 1870s, virtually innocent of politics. Almost to a man, the students in *El Filibusterismo* are depicted as gossips, opportunists, blowhards, cynics, rich do-nothings, spongers and cheats. The only one who is painted as goodhearted and patriotic, the *indio* Isagani, is still a firm, naïve believer in the campaign, and

<sup>56</sup> 'Tranquilizaos, pacíficos vecinos de Kalamba! Ninguno de vosotros se llama Tales, ninguno de vosotros ha cometido el crimen! Vosotros os llamáis... Silvestre Ubaldo, Manuel Hidalgo, Paciano Mercado, os llamáis todo el pueblo de Kalambal' This apostrophe is how Chapter x ends. It is reminiscent of the famous ending to Dekker's *Max Havelaar*, where the author casts aside his characters and his plot to launch a hair-raising broadside in his own name at the Dutch colonial regime in the Indies and its backers in the Netherlands.

<sup>57</sup> One of Rizal's political hobbies at this time was to insist on spelling Tagalog words, even when, or perhaps especially when, they derived from Spanish, with his own orthographic system. One of the provocations involved was to substitute the aggressively non-Castilian 'k' for 'c' and 'w' for 'ue'. Hence *pweude* for *puede* and, here, Kalamba for Calamba.

without any serious political ideas. It is thus not easy to avoid the conclusion that almost the entire subplot is simply historical Spain oceanically transferred to an imagined Manila.

But this is by no means all. In the crucial early chapter ('Simoun') in which the reader learns—because Basilio accidentally recognizes him—that Simoun is actually Ibarra, the naïve hero of *Noli Me Tangere*, the question of the campaign is introduced into their conversation. To the reader's probable surprise, the cynical 'nihilist' conspirator Simoun sounds, as it were, a violently Basque or Polish note.<sup>58</sup>

Ah youth! Always naïve, always dreaming, always running after butterflies and flowers. You unite so that by your efforts you can bind your motherland [*patria*] to Spain with garlands of roses, when in fact you are forging chains harder than a diamond! You ask for equality of rights, and the hispanization of your customs, without understanding that what you ask for is death, the destruction of your nationality [*nacionalidad*], the obliteration of your motherland, and the consecration of tyranny! What will you become in the future? A people [*pueblo*] without character, a nation without liberty; everything in you will borrowed, even your very defects. You ask for hispanization, and you do not blanch with shame when it is denied you! And even if it be granted to you, what do you want with it? What would you gain? If you are lucky, a country of pronunciamentos, a country of civil wars, a republic of predators and malcontents like some of the republics of South America! . . . Spanish will never be the common language in this country, the people will never speak it, because that language does not have the words to express the ideas in their minds and the sentiments in their hearts. Each people has its own, as it has its own way of feeling. What will you gain from Spanish, the few of you who speak it? Kill your originality, subordinate your thoughts to other minds, and instead of making yourselves free, turn yourselves into veritable slaves! Nine out of ten of you who presume yourselves *ilustrados* are renegades to your country. Those who speak Spanish forget their own tongue, which they no longer write or understand. How many have I seen who pretend not to know a single word of it! Luckily you have a government of imbeciles. While Russia, in order to enslave Poland, compels her to speak Russian, while Germany prohibits French in the conquered provinces, your government endeavors to have you keep your own tongue, and you, in turn, an amazing people under an unbelievable government, you

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<sup>58</sup> The comparison is not idle. On p. xxix of his introduction to *Noli Me Tangere*, Zea quotes from Unamuno's 'Elogio' the following: 'In the Philippines, as in my own Basque country, Spanish is a foreign language and of recent implantation . . . I learned to stammer in Spanish, and we spoke Spanish at home, but it was the Spanish of Bilbao, i.e. a poverty-stricken and timid Spanish. [Hence] we have been forced to remodel it, to forge by our efforts a language of our own. So it is that what in a certain respect is our weakness as writers is also our strength.'

insist on stripping yourselves of your own *nacionalidad*. One and all, you forget that so long as a people conserves its language, it also preserves the guarantee of its liberty, as a man his independence while he preserves his way of thinking. Language is the very thought [*pensamiento*] of a people.<sup>59</sup>

The tirade is powerful enough to let the reader forget that Ibarra-Simoun had an unscrupulous and cruel Basque grandfather, and that for purposes of his disguise affects a bad, heavily accented Tagalog; or that this denunciation of Hispanization is expressed in excellent Spanish. She might also overlook a contradictory argument of Simoun a few lines earlier: 'Do you want to add still one more language to the forty-odd already spoken in the islands so that you understand each other all the less?'<sup>60</sup> But the important thing is that Rizal never elsewhere wrote publicly in these vitriolic terms while in Europe—which would have appalled the comrades around *La Solidaridad*. In Spain he would have been speaking to the present, but transferred to Manila he is speaking to the future, with Poland and Alsace brought in as warnings.

Similar space-time shifts are visible as the novel moves towards its climax. After the campaign for a Spanish-language academy has failed, mysterious 'subversive' posters (*pasquinades*) appear all over the university one night, leading the regime to indiscriminate arrests—a clear replication of Cánovas's raids on the Central University of Madrid at the start of Rizal's senior year. The mysterious posters quickly cause a general panic, fed by wild rumours of insurrection and invasions of ferocious bandits, which recall the Mano Negra panic in Andalusia in 1883, and foreshadow the so-called 'revolutionary' peasant attack on Jerez early in 1892. It is interesting that Rizal anchors these plot developments in the Philippines by giving the relevant chapter the (untranslated) Tagalog title *Tatakut*, which means 'panic'.

### *Dansons la Ravachole*

Finally, we come to Simoun's bomb-plot itself, which is to be accompanied by armed attacks by Tales' men and others outside the law, including

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<sup>59</sup> *El Filibusterismo*, chapter vii ('Simoun'), p. 47. My rough translation; the original is not included here for reasons of space.

<sup>60</sup> '¿Queréis añadir un idioma más á los cuarenta y tantos que se hablan en las islas para entenderos cada vez menos?' *El Filibusterismo*, p. 47. There is as yet, evidently, no alternative national language. In Rizal's time Tagalog was understood only on the island of Luzon, and even there, only in the region around Manila

a cruelly abused peninsular, who have agreed to coordinate with the mysterious jeweller. There are a number of curious features to this failed conspiracy. First, imagined in 1890–91, it precedes rather than follows the spectacular wave of bomb outrages that rocked Spain and France in 1892–94. From 1888 on, however, a growing number of explosions of bombs and petards had occurred, typically in industrial Barcelona, but also in Madrid, Valencia and Cádiz. Most were planted in factories, few caused loss of life or serious injuries, and almost none resulted in the unmasking of the perpetrators. There is every reason to suppose that they were arranged by angry workers under the influence of anarchist ideas, though perhaps some were organized by police agents-provocateurs. But the numbers of bombings and their gravity increased markedly after the 'Jerez Uprising' of January 8, 1892. That night, some 50–60 peasants entered the town to attack the prison where some of their comrades had earlier been incarcerated and tortured. It seems they expected, naively, that the local military garrison would support them. The police dispersed them, and it appeared that one peasant and two townspeople had been killed. Near the end of his third ministry, Cánovas launched an indiscriminate wave of repression against peasants and workers, and on February 10, four of the supposed leaders of the 'uprising' were publicly garrotted.<sup>61</sup>

A month later, a series of serious explosions started in Paris, the work of the half-Dutch, half-Alsatian François-Claude Koenigstein, better known as 'Ravachol', a criminal with a record of murder and robbery. He was quickly caught and put on trial. Claiming that he had acted in revenge for earlier violent police repression against a workers' demonstration in

<sup>61</sup> Nuñez Florencio, *El Terrorismo*, p. 49; Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, pp. 175–80. Esenwein's excellent research has turned up some strange things. From one angle, the chain of events began with the Haymarket 'Riot' in Chicago at the beginning of May 1886. In an atmosphere of anti-'communist' and anti-immigrant hysteria, and after a travesty of a fair trial, four anarchists were hanged that November. The executions aroused indignation all over Europe (and of course also in the us), and on the initiative of French workers' organizations, May Day came to be celebrated annually (except in the us) in commemoration of the victims. The whole Spanish Left was a vigorous supporter of the new tradition, especially while Sagasta was still in power. Just after the May Day commemorations of 1891, two bombs exploded in Cádiz, killing one worker, and injuring several others. The local police arrested 157 people, but never found any provable perpetrator, so the possibility of agents-provocateurs cannot be ruled out. It was some of these prisoners whom the men of Jerez intended to liberate. The odd thing is that just at this juncture none other than Malatesta, accompanied by the rising anarchist intellectual star Tárrida del Marmol,

Clichy, followed by the trial of some workers at which the prosecutor demanded (but did not win) the death penalty, Ravachol told the court that he had acted on revolutionary anarchist principles. On July 11 he went to the guillotine shouting '*Vive l'Anarchie!*' and promising that his death would be avenged.<sup>62</sup> His was the first political execution in France since the massacres of the Communards.

In spite of his dubious past, Ravachol's death made him an instant hero of the *anarchisant* left on both sides of the Pyrenees. Núñez Florencio quotes a well-known popular song of the time, *La Ravachole*, as follows: *Dansons la Ravachole! / Vive le son, vive le son / Dansons la Ravachole / Vive le son / De l'explosion!* The famous theorist of anarchism, Elisée Reclus, was quoted in the Spanish anarchist press as saying that 'I am one of those who see in Ravachol a hero with a rare grandeur of spirit', while the writer Paul Adam, a member of Mallarmé's circle, wrote an *Éloge de Ravachol* in which he affirmed that 'Ravachol saw the suffering and misery of the people around him, and sacrificed his life in a holocaust. His charity, his disinterestedness, the vigour of his actions, his courage in the face of ineluctable death, raised him to the splendour of legend. In these times of cynicism and irony, a saint has been born to us.' The Spanish anarchist press described him as a 'violent Christ' and 'brave and dedicated revolutionary', and some anarchists put out two short-lived publications in his honour: *Ravachol* in late 1892 and *El Eco de Ravachol* early in 1893.<sup>63</sup>

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was on a lecture and organizing tour of Spain, and was due to speak in Jerez. On hearing the news of the violent events, Malatesta rather courageously decided to keep going towards Cádiz, but disguised as a prosperous Italian businessman. He doesn't seem to have accomplished anything. Esenwein thinks it significant that neither at the time nor later did the anarchists proclaim January 8 as 'propaganda by the deed'. To the contrary, they always insisted that they had nothing to do with it.

<sup>62</sup> See Maitron, *Le Mouvement*, pp. 213–24. In his prison cell he told interviewers that he had lost his religious faith after reading Eugène Sue's *Le Juif errant*. Maitron points out that French anarchism in this period was largely a matter of tiny, clandestine or semi-clandestine units without real organizational ties between them. This characteristic made it hard for the police to monitor them effectively, and also made it relatively easy for criminal elements to penetrate them. French anarchism did not become a real political force till the end of the 1890s with the abandonment of propaganda by the deed, and the onset of syndicalism in working-class political life. Spanish anarchism had a much stronger and wider social foundation. That Ravachol was partly Alsatian is my deduction from the testimony of Ramón Sempau in his *Los Victimarios*, p. 15.

<sup>63</sup> Núñez Florencio, *El Terrorismo*, pp. 121–23.

The autumn of 1893 saw major repercussions of the Ravachol affair. On September 24, Paulino Pallás threw two bombs at the Captain-General of Catalonia, Gen. Arsenio Martínez Campos (signer of the Pact of Zanjón, which brought Céspedes's 10-year insurrection in Cuba to a peaceful end). This *attentat* resulted in one death, and several grave injuries (Campos was only scratched). Pallás made no attempt to hide or escape, but throwing his cap into the air, shouted '*Viva l'Anarquía!*' He was executed by firing squad a month later at the soon-to-be world-notorious fortress of Montjuich.<sup>64</sup> On November 7, the 32-year-old Salvador Santiago threw a huge bomb into the Barcelona Opera House during a performance of Rossini's *Guillermo Tell*, causing a large number of deaths and severe injuries among scores of the city's moneyed elite.<sup>65</sup> Many innocent suspects were arrested and tortured before Santiago was caught in hiding. After declaring he had acted to avenge Pallás, whom he knew and admired, he was garrotted at Montjuich on the 24th.<sup>66</sup> Martial

<sup>64</sup> For Spain, this was the first clear example of 'propaganda by the deed'. In October 1878 a young Catalan cooper called Juan Oliva had fired a gun at Alfonso XII but missed. A year later, the 19-year-old Francisco Otero tried to do the same, but proved an equally poor shot. Neither was connected to anarchist circles, and both were promptly executed. (Núñez Florencio, *El Terrorismo*, p. 38.) Pallás was a poor young lithographer from Tarragona, who emigrated to Argentina; he married there, and then moved to Brazil in search of a better livelihood to support his family. He became a radical and anarchist while working as a typesetter in Santa Fé. On May Day 1892 he threw a petard into the Alcantara theatre in Rio shouting '*Viva l'Anarquía!*' No one was hurt, and the audience burst into cheers. When the Spanish police searched his house they found anarchist newspapers, a copy of Kropotkin's *The Conquest of Hunger*, and a lithograph of the Haymarket Martyrs. Most historians have argued that he acted partly out of indignation at the Jerez garrottings, but Núñez Florencio says there is no document in Pallás's hand to support this claim. Compare Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, pp. 184–5; Núñez Florencio, *El Terrorismo*, pp. 49, 53, and Maura, 'Terrorism', p. 130 (he says two were killed, and twelve wounded).

<sup>65</sup> The choice of this opera may not have been random. At its first 'convention' in 1879 Narodnaya Volya produced a programme that, *inter alia*, stated: 'We will fight with the means employed by Wilhelm Tell'. The legendary Swiss archer was widely regarded as an ancestral hero by late nineteenth-century radicals and nationalists. See Walter Laqueur, *A History of Terrorism*, rev. ed., New Brunswick, NJ 2002, p. 22.

<sup>66</sup> Santiago had started out as a Carlist and ardent Catholic, but poverty, petty crime (smuggling) and unpayable debts had aroused his interest in anarchism. Five other people were executed with him, though there is no convincing evidence that he did not, like Pallás, act on his own. See especially Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, pp. 186–7 and Maura, 'Terrorism', p. 130. According to Bécarud and Lapouge, *Anarchistes*, p. 44, when he was asked what would happen to his daughters after his execution, Salvador Santiago said: 'If they are pretty, the bourgeois will take care of them.' Anarchist *boutade*? Or myth?

law was proclaimed in Barcelona by Sagasta (back in power since 1892), which lasted for a year. Its executor was none other than Weyler, just back from the Philippines. The anarchist press was forcibly shut down.

Then on December 9, Auguste Vaillant hurled a large bomb into the French Parliament, which fortunately killed no one, but wounded several of the deputies. On February 5 the next year, he was guillotined, the first instance in French memory of the death penalty in a case where no victim had been killed.<sup>67</sup> (President Sadi Carnot refused to commute the sentence, for which he was stabbed to death in Lyon, on June 24, 1894, by the young Italian anarchist Santo Jeronimo Cesario—who was guillotined two months later.) The culmination of this wave of anarchist bombs (though not its end by any means) came with a series of death-dealing explosions in Paris immediately following Vaillant's execution, and clearly in part to avenge him. The perpetrator was found to be Emile Henry, a young intellectual born in Spain to fleeing Communard exiles. He too was quickly caught, and guillotined on May 21.<sup>68</sup> For this study the single most important bombing did not come till the 'outrage' of Corpus Christi Day on June 7, 1896, in Barcelona—but this will be left for consideration in Part Three.

None of these five famous bombers of 1892–94 fit Simoun's personal profile. All of them were quite young, poor, half-educated (except for Henry), and self-proclaimed anarchists. None of their bombs had anything Huysmanesque about them, though Pallás is said to have used 'Fenian-type' bombs rather than the standard 'Orsini' model.<sup>69</sup> But consider some of the words that Emile Henry spoke at his trial, as reported by Joll. Asked why he had killed so many innocent people,

<sup>67</sup> Maitron says Vaillant came in handy for certain *dirigeants* of the Third Republic, who were reeling from public revelations about the Panama Canal Bubble scandal, and found him a wonderful way to shift public attention elsewhere—also to enact harsh laws against 'revolutionary propaganda' of any kind. *Le Mouvement*, p. 237.

<sup>68</sup> According to Joll, *The Anarchists*, p. 115, Henry was an outstanding student who got into the École Polytechnique, but then dropped out for the sake of anarchism. Clémenceau, deeply moved by Henry's execution, wrote: 'Henry's crime was that of a savage. But society's act seems to me a base revenge. Let the partisans of the death penalty go, if they have the courage, to sniff the blood at La Roquette [after 1851 the prison where all death sentences in Paris were carried out]. Then we shall talk...' Quoted in Maitron, *Le Mouvement*, p. 246.

<sup>69</sup> Núñez Florencio, *El Terrorismo*, p. 53, quoting a contemporary newspaper source. Felice Orsini (b. 1819) was a veteran of the 1848 revolutions, a deputy in the ephemeral Roman Republic, and a committed Italian nationalist. Imprisoned by the Austrian regime in the fortress of Mantua in 1855, he made a spectacular escape, and headed for Palmerston's England, where Mazzini was plotting insurrection

Henry replied sardonically that: '*il n'y a pas des innocents*' [There are no innocents]. Then:

I was convinced that the existing organization [of society] was bad; I wanted to struggle against it so as to hasten its disappearance. I brought to the struggle a profound hatred, intensified every day by the revolting spectacle of a society where all is base, all is cowardly, where everything is a barrier to the development of human passions, to generous tendencies of the heart, to the free flight of thought . . . I wanted to show the bourgeoisie that their pleasures would be disturbed, that their golden calf would tremble violently on its pedestal, until the final shock would cast it down in mud and blood.

He went on to declare that anarchists

do not spare bourgeois women and children, because the wives and children of those they love are not spared either. Are not those children innocent victims, who, in the slums, die slowly of anaemia because bread is scarce at home; or those women who grow pale in your workshops and wear themselves out to earn forty sous a day, and yet are lucky when poverty does not turn them into prostitutes; those old people whom you have turned into machines for production all their lives, and whom you cast on the garbage dump and the workhouse when their strength is exhausted. At least have the courage of your crimes, gentlemen of the bourgeoisie, and agree that our reprisals are fully legitimate . . .

You have hanged men in Chicago, cut off their heads in Germany, strangled them in Jerez, shot them in Barcelona, guillotined them in Montbrisons and Paris, but what you will never destroy is anarchism. Its roots are too deep, it is born in the heart of a corrupt society which is falling to pieces; it is a violent reaction against the established order. It represents egalitarian and libertarian aspirations which are battering down existing authority; it is everywhere, which makes it impossible to capture. It will end by killing you.<sup>70</sup>

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from seedy lodgings on the Fulham Road. His 1856 sensation, *The Austrian Dungeons in Italy*, quickly sold 35,000 copies, and his Byronic good looks and fervent rhetoric made him wildly popular on the lecture circuit. Meantime, he was inventing a new type of bomb, made mainly from fulminate of mercury, which did not need a fuse but exploded on impact. He tested it on a hut in Putney, and in disused quarries in Devonshire and Sheffield. Then, believing that the assassination of Louis Napoleon would spark a revolution in France, which would cause Italy to follow Paris's example, he crossed the Channel, and tried out his invention on January 14, 1858. His target was barely scratched but 156 people were injured, and eight eventually succumbed. Orsini was guillotined on March 13. Palmerston tried to pass a Conspiracy To Murder Bill, making plotting to murder foreign rulers a felony, but mishandled its passage, and was driven from office. See Jad Adams, 'Striking a Blow for Freedom', *History Today*, vol. 53, no. 9 (September 2003), pp. 18–19.

<sup>70</sup> Nuñez Florencio, *El Terrorismo*, p. 115–19. Note Henry's references to Jerez and Chicago, as well as Pallás and Vaillant.

Henry's rhetoric uncannily reproduces that of Simoun: hastening the rush of a corrupt system to the abyss, violent revenge against the ruling class, (including its 'innocents') for its crimes against the wretched and the poor, and the vision of an egalitarian and free society in the future.<sup>77</sup> Although Tagalog peasants had their own utopian and messianic traditions, embedded in folk-Catholicism,<sup>78</sup> Simoun's discourse does not reflect them but rather a language of European social fury that went back at least to the French Revolution, if not before, and was a special feature of anarchism in the era of 'propaganda by the deed'. But Simoun is imagined in a more complex, and also contradictory way. There is in him a negative photograph of Sue's aristocratic 'socialist' Rodolphe, who practices his own vigilante justice on evildoers and exploiters, of Huysmans's *Des Esseintes* adding one more enemy to a hideous society, and perhaps even Nechayev.<sup>79</sup> Much more important, however, is that Simoun is, in his own way, an anticolonial nationalist, who has national independence through 'revolution' on his mind; and his conspiracy is not just a symbolic moment of 'propaganda by the deed'.

<sup>77</sup> See 'Nitroglycerine in the Pomegranate', NLR 27, p. 109.

<sup>78</sup> The locus classicus is Reynaldo Clemeña Ileto, *Pasyón and Revolution: Popular Movements in The Philippines, 1840–1910*, Quezon City 1989.

<sup>79</sup> One should not rule Nechayev out. The pamphlet that he coauthored with Bakunin in 1869 was widely read all over Europe, and some of its themes seem echoed by Simoun in *El Filibusterismo*. In the issues of *La Solidaridad* of January 15 and 31, 1893, there is a curious two-part article, titled 'Una Visita', by Ferdinand Blumentritt, describing an unexpected visitor in the form of Simoun, who explains that Rizal had him appear to die in the novel to conceal from the colonial authorities his survival and his massive political multiplication among the Filipino population. A long and heated debate develops between them on the future of the Philippines, and on the methods to be pursued in the political struggle. At one point, the indignant ethnologist says: 'Mr Simoun, you are not merely a subversive, you are also a nihilist [Señor Simoun, usted es no solo filibustero sino también nihilista]'. To this, as he makes his mysterious departure, Simoun retorts sardonically: 'I am leaving for Russia, to enrol there in the school of the nihilists [Me marcho á Rusia para estudiar allí en la escuela de nihilistas]'. Nechayev had already died, aged only 35, in a tsarist prison the year before Rizal arrived in Europe. But Blumentritt was in some ways Rizal's closest friend, and I think it unlikely that he would have associated Simoun with Nihilism if the two had not discussed the latter seriously. Besides, Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* had come out in French translation in Paris in 1886, not long after Rizal had left the French capital for Germany and Blumentritt-in-Austria. We know also, thanks to De Ocampo that Rizal read (but when exactly?) Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* in a German translation. (My thanks to Megan Thomas for bringing Blumentritt's odd articles to my attention.)

In the early 1890s, Filipinos and Cubans were especially well positioned to think along such lines, since they were subjected to the only European state which had by then lost 90 per cent of its imperium to independence movements. Simoun may speak scornfully of the Spanish Americas, but he understands a certain hope that their history opened up—which was not then available to the subjects of any other empire.

When Basilio—the young medical student recruited by Simoun after friars have killed his little brother and driven his mother insane—learns of the ‘infernal machine’ inside the pomegranate lamp with which Simoun intends to blow up the colonial elite, Captain-General included, at the wedding party, he exclaims: ‘But what will the world say at the sight of such carnage?’ Simoun replies:

The world will applaud as always, legitimizing the more powerful and the more violent. Europe applauded when the nations of the West sacrificed the lives of millions of *indios* in America, and definitely not in order to found other nations far more moral or peace-loving. Yonder stands the North, with its egoistic liberty, its Lynch law, its political manipulations; yonder stands the South with its turbulent republics, its barbarous revolutions, its civil wars, and its *pronunciamientos*, like its mother Spain! Europe applauded when a powerful Portugal plundered the Moluccas, and [now] applauds as England destroys in the Pacific region the local primitive races in order to implant that of its own emigrants. Europe will applaud [us], as it applauds the end of a drama, the denouement of a tragedy. The common people barely notice the bases of what is happening, they simply observe its effects!<sup>74</sup>

After the us, Colombia, Argentina, and Paraguay have had their independence applauded (accepted) by Europe, so to speak, why not the Philippines and Cuba? In these sentences, one feels how much closer to the Philippines of the 1890s were Mexico and Peru than were Tonkin

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<sup>74</sup> Basilio: ‘¿Qué dirá el mundo, á la vista de tanta carnicería?’ Simoun: ‘El mundo aplaudirá como siempre, dando la razón al más fuerte, al más violento! . . . Europa ha aplaudido cuando las naciones del occidente sacrificaron en América millones de indios y no por cierto para fundar naciones mucho más morales ni más pacíficas; allí está el Norte con su libertad egoista, su ley de Lynch, sus engaños políticos; allí está el Sur con sus repúblicas intranquilas, sus revoluciones bárbaras, guerras civiles, *pronunciamientos*, como en su madre España! Europa ha aplaudido cuando la poderosa Portugal despojó á las islas Molucas, aplaude cuando Inglaterra destruye en el Pacífico las razas primitivas para implantar la de sus emigrados. Europa aplaudirá como se aplaude al fin de un drama, al fin de una tragedia; el vulgo se fija poco en el fondo, sola mira el efecto!’ *El Filibusterismo*, chapter xxii ('La Ultima Razón [The Final Argument]'), p. 250.

and Java. In effect, a successful insurrection was quite possible in the Philippines. And indeed, four months before Rizal's death, Andrés Bonifacio began one on the outskirts of Manila—a bare eighteen months after Martí led the way in Cuba.

### *An enigmatic smile*

This brings us to one last curious aspect of *El Filibusterismo*. The novel's final pages are filled with a lengthy dialogue between the dying Simoun and the gentle native priest, Father Florentino, with whom he has found temporary refuge. Simoun poses the question of Ivan Karamazov. He says that if *vuestro Dios* demands such inhuman sacrifices, such humiliations, tortures, expropriations, misery and exploitation of the good and innocent, telling them simply to suffer and to work, 'What kind of God is this?'—'*¿Qué Dios es ése?*'<sup>75</sup> He says no more, while the old priest tells him that God understands all Simoun's sufferings and will forgive him, but that he has chosen evil methods to achieve worthy ends, and this is inadmissible. Most commentators have assumed that the old priest represents Rizal's last word on the politico-moral drama of the novel, and find their views reinforced by the fact that (as we shall see in Part Three) Rizal refused to have anything to do with Bonifacio's conspiracy—even though it was made in his name—and indeed denounced it. But to make this judgement so easily requires overlooking a strange brief chapter near the end, called 'El Misterio', of whose seven pages in the original manuscript three were blacked out by the author.

We are in the house of the rich Orenda family, at which three callers have arrived, in the chaotic aftermath of the failed explosion and armed incursions. One of the visitors is the young blade Momoy (suitor of the eldest Orenda daughter Sensia), who attended the fateful wedding party of Paulita Gomez and was a befuddled witness to what happened. Another is the student Isagani who, to save Paulita's life, had seized the lethal lamp and plunged into the Pasig river with it. Momoy tells the family that an unknown robber ran off with the lamp, before diving into the water. Sensia breaks in to say, quite remarkably: 'A robber? A member of the Black Hand? [Un ladrón? Uno de la Mano Negra?] No one knows, Momoy continues, whether he was a Spaniard, a Chinese, or an *indio*. The third visitor, a silversmith who helped do the wedding decorations, adds that

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<sup>75</sup> *El Filibusterismo*, chapter xxxix (untitled), p. 283.

the rumour is that the lamp was on the verge of exploding and the house of the bride was also mined with gunpowder. Momoy is stunned and panic-stricken at this, and by his expression shows his fear. Then, seeing that Sensia has noticed, and mortified in his masculinity: "What a shame!" he exclaimed with an effort, "How the robber bungled it! All would have been killed . . .". The women are completely petrified. Then:

"It is always wrong to seize something which does not belong to one", said Isagani with an enigmatic smile. "If the robber had known what it was all about, and if he had been able to reflect upon it, he certainly would not have done what he did." And, after a pause, he added: "I would not be in his place for anything in the world."

An hour later, he takes his leave to 'retire permanently' in the household of his uncle (Father Florentino, the native priest at the dying Simoun's side), and disappears from the novel.<sup>76</sup> The goodhearted, patriotic student, who has never smiled enigmatically before, regrets that he wrecked Simoun's scheme. The Spanish makes it clear that 'permanently (*por siempre*)' is merely his intention at the moment of departure. It is as if the reader is invited to await a sequel to *El Filibusterismo*.

We are now perhaps in a better position to understand both the proleptic character of the novel, and the significance of Rizal's terming it a Filipino novel. Technically the prolepsis is engineered by a massive transfer of events, experiences and sentiments from Spain to the Philippines, which then appear as shadows of an imminent future; their imminence is in turn guaranteed by a firm location in the time of Captain-General Weyler, who was still in power when the book came out. Contextually, the future emerges both from the past and the present in a different sense. The Spanish Empire had always been primarily American, and its virtual evaporation between 1810 and 1830 promised a final liquidation to the residues, while also proffering warnings of the consequences of prematurity. Europe itself, Rizal thought, was menaced by a vast conflagration, conflicts among its warring powers, but also by violent movement from below. *El Filibusterismo* was written

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<sup>76</sup> '¡Qué lastima! exclamó haciendo un esfuerzo; qué mal ha hecho el ladrón! Hubieran muerto todos . . .' 'Siempre es malo apoderarse de lo que no es suyo, contestó Isagani con enigmática sonrisa; si ese ladrón hubiese sabido de qué se trataba y hubiese podido reflexionar, de seguro que no lo habría hecho. Y añadió después de una pausa. Por nada del mundo quisiera estar en su lugar'. *El Filibusterismo*, pp. 271-72.

from the wings of a global proscenium on which Bismarck and Vera Zasulich, Yankee manipulations and Cuban insurrections, Meiji Japan and the British Museum, Huysmans and Mallarmé, Catalonia and the Carolines, Kropotkin and Salvador Santiago, all had their places. *Cochers* and 'homeopathists' too.

In late 1945, a bare two months after the Japanese Occupation of his country had collapsed, but Dutch colonialism had yet to return in force, Indonesia's young, first Prime Minister, Sutan Sjahrir, described the condition of his revolution-starting countrymen as *gelisah*. This is not a word that is easily translated into English: one has to imagine a semantic range covering 'feverish', 'anxious', 'restless', 'unmoored', and 'expectant'. This is the feel of *El Filibusterismo*. Something is coming.

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## REVIEWS

*One China, Many Paths*, edited by Chaohua Wang

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ARIF DIRLIK

### CHINA'S CRITICAL INTELLIGENTSIA

While contemporary Chinese readers, Wang Chaohua observes in her introduction to this selection of essays,

have access in their native language to large areas of Western literature and philosophy, political and economic thought, to classical texts and contemporary ideas of the world . . . this process of cultural familiarization has been one-sided. Neither the length and depth of traditional Chinese civilization, nor the importance of China in the modern history of the world, are reflected in a comparable range of Western translations of Chinese thought and culture.

Her aim in this volume 'is to help in a modest way to correct this imbalance, by presenting the diversity of outlook among contemporary Chinese thinkers directly'.

Few would dispute Wang's observation, although what she has to say, and the manner in which it is said, bears further reflection; I will return to it below. The undertaking itself is to be commended without reservation. *One China, Many Paths* joins a growing list of publications seeking to acquaint English-speaking readers with developments in the PRC through the works of Chinese intellectuals themselves. Whereas most previous volumes have concentrated on culture and cultural analysis, however, Wang's collection stands out for its focus on issues of democracy and social justice, as seen by a varied and distinguished group of Chinese thinkers. It is an important

contribution, both in introducing public intellectuals quite well-known in Chinese circles to the Anglophone world and in making available a body of writings on issues of utmost concern to critics of the developmentalist path on which the Chinese Communist Party has launched the country.

These concerns no doubt relate to Wang's own experience. Born in Beijing she is, like many of the writers in this volume, a graduate of 1989, but one who had been formed politically and intellectually during the more radical days of the Cultural Revolution. She became a leader of the student movement in Tiananmen Square, confronting Premier Li Peng on national television. After the military crackdown of June 4th she was one of the two women on the most-wanted list broadcast by the government in the dragnet that followed. After eight months in hiding she reached America, where she is now an essayist and student of Chinese literature at UCLA. Most of her contributors are also among the older *alumnae* of 1989, born in the 1950s; their differences have been magnified significantly since then with the rapid changes in Chinese society—most importantly, the dizzying incorporation into global capitalism following Deng Xiaoping's famous imperial tour of the South in 1992, and the structural transformations it has wrought both at home and in the PRC's relationship to the world at large.

Following a suggestion by Wang Hui—the best known of these intellectuals in North America and Europe, whose interview leads the volume—Wang establishes a loose parallel between the 1980s and 1990s, and the two decades that followed the May Fourth Movement of 1919: in each case, a decade of euphoria and intellectual excitement is succeeded by one of intellectual sobriety, introspection and complexity, with the passage between them marked by a traumatic event—the Guomindang suppression of the revolutionary movement in 1927, and the Tiananmen Massacre of 1989. She is aware nevertheless of the limits of such analogies—which, as so often, may say more about the self-image of those making them than about the historical realities of changing intellectual moods, or the relationship of one period to the other. For all the euphoric embrace of new cultural currents from abroad (the so-called 'culture fever'), the 1980s were infused by the deep anxieties created by post-revolutionary uncertainties that were sustained—as they still are, if to a lesser extent—by bouts of repression or relaxation from above. June 1989 was a surprise only to those who had come to believe in their own illusions about Deng's reforms. In fact, the issues of culture and society that exercised intellectuals in the 1980s had more in common with the debates on modernity in the 1930s.

On the other hand, the greater complexity of intellectual and cultural exploration in the 1990s has been accompanied by serious doubts about the value of such activity, in a society which—at least in major centres like Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou—has come to assume all the trappings

of advanced consumerism, albeit surrounded by intensifying poverty and inequality. Intellectuals have recovered from the severe marginalization and impoverishment they experienced in the first half of the 1990s. But like their peers elsewhere, they now face the twin challenges of their own class devaluation and the commodification of intellectual life. Wang is correct to point to the two trends that have set the context for these exchanges since the turn of the century: the emergence of a transborder 'Chinese space of discussion', which calls into question the actual relationship of intellectuals to the society they write about; and the growing professionalization of university life which, within the context of cultural commodification, raises serious questions about the possibility of critical work. What makes these issues more urgent is that the same trends have also opened discussions in the PRC to fleeting fashions from abroad.

In the 1980s, intellectual and cultural work in the PRC was largely shaped by an urge to escape an oppressive socialist legacy. With integration into the global economy, rapid development and the increasingly open identification of the Communist Party with capitalism, the legacies left behind by the socialist revolutionary past have begun to appear in a more positive light, dividing intellectuals in new ways. A basic goal of *One China, Many Paths* is to convey a sense of these differences, and of the broad political spectrum into which critical intellectual life has been diffracted by traumatic events and social change. The collection reveals eloquently the common concerns that drive politically-engaged intellectual work in the PRC, as well as the disagreements over solutions that divide the thinkers themselves.

Wang's introduction gives a summary but useful history of developments on the Chinese intellectual scene over the decade and a half since 1989. The 'new left' versus 'liberal' division that had emerged by the late 1990s also, to a certain extent, characterizes the selections in this volume. Five of the contributors—Wang Hui, Gan Yang, Wang Xiaoming, Qian Liqun and Li Changping—can be situated on the 'left' side of the political spectrum, Wang suggests; and six—Zhu Xueqin, Qin Hui, He Qinglian, Xiao Xuehui and Wang Yi—on the 'liberal' side; while Chen Pingyuan, Wang Anyi and Hu Angang 'would probably disavow any leaning to one or the other'. The labels are very tentative: there is much overlap between the positions, which share a critical attitude toward recent developments in Chinese society but otherwise range over a broad political spectrum. In Part One, which consists of four long interviews, the new left and liberal perspectives are strongly articulated by Wang Hui and Zhu Xueqin, respectively—two prominent representatives of these positions. Chen Pingyuan voices the concerns of a writer bent on reaffirming the importance of scholarship, as against general intellectual work. This was also a point of departure for Wang Hui and others in the journal *Xueren* ('scholar') in the early 1990s, and has been one

moment in the revival of interest in the nationalistically oriented *Guoxue* ('national studies') since 1993. The interview with Qin Hui, who teaches history at Tsinghua, offers an impressive analysis of social and political inequality in the PRC, theoretically incisive and with a broad range of historical comparison—Ancient Greece and Rome, Russia, China, Europe; he is perhaps better described as an independent socialist/populist than as liberal in political orientation.

Part Two deals with social issues. It is interesting, and revealing, that three of the four contributions here are by writers that Wang would classify as 'liberal'. He Qinglian, whose seminal and initially proscribed book, *Modernization's Pitfalls*, launched a wave of social criticism, provides a concise analysis of an emergent class structure in the PRC—as with several of the texts, this was first presented in English in *NLR*. The essays by Wang Yi, Hu Angang and Li Changping offer sharp critiques of corruption and the plunder of resources by a political elite that has benefited enormously from the privatization of public property which it engineered—as well as from the intensifying exploitation of workers and peasants in the name of the superiority of socialist developmental efficiency.

Cultural questions are addressed in Part Three, with Xiao Xuehui offering a spirited polemic on the 'industrialization' of education with, once again, efficiency as the fetishized goal. Wang Xiaoming's 'Manifesto of Cultural Studies' engages in a sustained critique of the 'new ideology' as camouflage for social ills, and on the commodification of culture. The well-known novelist Wang Anyi is the only one to address issues of gender, although her criticisms of modernity and globalization are unfortunately too cursory to add much to the substance gathered here. Gan Yang, whose writings in the 1980s gained him considerable popularity, considers in a somewhat uninspired essay the prospects for party politics and constitutional government in China, in the light of us experience—federalism, or a unified state? A remarkable piece by Qian Liqun takes up the revolutionary legacy in Chinese thought, including that of Mao Zedong, which he colourfully describes as 'a fruit hard to consume, but impossible to discard'. Finally, Part Four consists of a three-way discussion on desirable futures for the PRC between Wang Chaohua and two other prominent graduates of Tiananmen, Wang Dan and Li Minqi. Li Minqi's explicitly Marxist analysis finds a counterpart in Wang Dan's liberalism, while Wang Chaohua's own position, somewhere between the two, reveals the limitations of the terms, left and liberal, within this context.

In Wang Hui's distinction, 'liberals want to separate the political and economic realms, whereas we argue that the problems of each are intertwined—you cannot always distinguish between them, or say which is more decisive'. The intellectuals associated with the 'new left' in this volume

are critical of the developmentalist fetishism that infuses the thinking of the current CCP leadership, and of incorporation into global capitalism motivated by neoliberal teleologies; of the ideological cover-up of new social problems, especially in the countryside, and of the commodification of everyday life. At the same time, they are unwilling to abandon the legacies of the Revolution, including those of Mao Zedong, or to give up on a search for 'alternative' modernities. 'Liberals', on the other hand, stress the distorting effects of Communist Party dictatorship on economic and social change, and seek solutions to the problems produced by development in its elimination. Zhu Xueqin sums up: 'The principal reason for the divergence between liberals and the new left is clear: while the latter focus on criticizing the market system, the former call for reform of the political system. This is the root of the difference between the two.'

Whether or not this adds up to a refusal to recognize a relationship between politics and the economy, as Wang Hui suggests, is another matter. The selections identified with the liberal camp are most impressive for their condemnation not only of the absence of democracy but also for the deepening social injustices in their country. Xu Ming, general editor of the 'China's Problems' series which published the mainland edition of He Qinglian's *Modernization's Pitfalls* (and a liberal by the logic of either Wang Hui or Zhu Xueqin) once told me that he and his group were the 'true Marxists' in the PRC—from a perspective that sees in Marxism a theoretical justification for the determination of the social and the political by the economic. On this view, it follows that the full realization of the free-market system is the precondition for political transformation and the alleviation of social inequality. The free-market system is what a radical Marxism challenges, of course, and this is the point of departure for China's new left. They also pay closer attention to issues of power and the multinationals' domination within a globalizing capitalism. Liberals invested much hope in strategies of privatization and in China's structural incorporation into the global economy. With the admission of the PRC into the WRO and the recent sell-offs, both these demands are being realized—neutralizing important liberal criticisms of the CCP. These developments will test liberal solutions to problems of democracy and social injustice. For the time being, of course, democracy in the PRC is still far distant; and if the consequences of neoliberalism elsewhere provide any evidence, the achievement of social justice through incorporation into the global market is likely to remain the most utopian of goals.

What is interesting is that economic development over the last decade has brought forth its own problems. Chinese intellectuals can once again speak to issues of political democracy and social justice, appealing in the process to positions that were suspect only a few years ago because of their association with 'conservatism' in the CCP. Nor should the labels that these

thinkers may attach to one another be allowed to obscure the complexities of the intellectual scene, or the radical transfigurations of left, liberal or even conservative politics in a post-socialist intellectual environment, still dominated by a Communist Party bent on carrying the country into capitalism in the name of an ever-more distant Communism. It is the left here that is most critical of the CCP in the name of democracy and social justice, as in the questions it raises about the preoccupation with globalization from the mid-1990s. Liberals—critical of the neoliberals who are influential in economic policy-making but otherwise quite happy to accommodate political despotism—focus rather on the reform of the political system which they hope will not only bring democracy but also alleviate social injustice. Conservatives (not represented in this volume) are bent on reviving national traditions, but are anxious to articulate these within the parameters of ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’.

Further complications emerge in the preoccupation with ‘globalization’ from the late 1990s, simultaneous with the increased visibility of the liberal–new left split—which may itself perhaps be viewed as a manifestation of the effects of globalization within Chinese thought. Beginning with the Jiang–Zhu leadership, and continuing under Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao, the Party-State in the PRC has been committed not just to opening the country to global capitalism—as with incorporation in the WTO—but also to projecting national power on the world scene, exemplified by the 2008 Beijing Olympics, among other things. Liberal cosmopolitanism and new left ‘nationalism’ are entangled in broader issues of national development, power and identity that endow their politics with considerable instability. This context, too, is important in grasping the meanings the various political labels carry in Chinese intellectual life.

Any selection of this kind is easily faulted for favouring certain trends over others. Given the complexities of the rapidly changing intellectual landscape in the PRC, it would be difficult to put together a collection truly representative of the scene as a whole. Still, the editor could have been more explicit in spelling out the orientation of the volume and its goals. On a technical note, given the rapidity of changes in the PRC over the last decade and a half, when and where an essay was first published has some importance. This information is missing from a number of the essays, especially unpublished articles or those first circulated on the internet. ‘Intellectual distinction and political representation’, which the editor took as the primary criteria of selection for the volume, are not guarantees in conveying a comprehensive or unbiased sense of the intellectual scene in the PRC. The first is a matter of judgement, and is not in itself an indicator of public influence. Neither does the political range represented here by any means exhaust that of Chinese intellectual life. Wang Chaohua herself notes several absences,

from technocratic intellectuals to representatives of nationalities. We could add: neoliberals, cultural conservatives, cultural and economic globalizers, ecologists and Party intellectuals (not just intellectuals in the Party, as many are, but those involved in bringing new ideas and orientations into the CCP). Fortunately, the writers here are well distributed in terms of their geographical origins, but there is little virtue attached to this since most now operate out of the major centres, Beijing or Shanghai. There is no explicit effort at regional representation *per se*, which should be crucial since inequalities among intellectuals are very much a function of current location, much more important than original birthplace in terms of the hearing they are given on the national (and international) scene. Finally, as noted, the editor points out that intellectual space no longer corresponds to national boundaries, especially with the increasing importance of the internet. Overseas intellectuals are participants in these discussions and, though there may be practical reasons for excluding them—their writings are already available in English, for example—the overall consequence is to distort the context of the debate.

Despite the importance of the questions of democracy and social justice that are the focus here, it should also be noted that this selection ignores, in its preoccupation with *things Chinese*, the silence of Chinese intellectuals on global issues of the utmost significance—which may go a long way toward explaining why they have not acquired much visibility or significance on the international intellectual scene. One point here is that intellectuals of whatever stripe are not immune to the pressures of their social environment. It is remarkable how easily many in China, especially in the major urban centres and institutions, have slipped back into elite roles, following the economic deprivation in the early 1990s. In some cases, this has been facilitated by grants from overseas, including European, US and Japanese sources. A sociology of intellectuals may be crucial to understanding their cultural production and *One China, Many Paths* could have devoted closer attention to this problem, if only to bring out the increasing resemblances between the intellectual scene in China and elsewhere.

The other issue is the asymmetry in native-language access to Chinese or Euro-American thought, one to which I referred at the beginning of this essay. Wang's criticism is a common one, echoing for example Theodore Huters, who writes in his introduction to Wang Hui's *China's New Order* that 'it has long been a matter of concern among Chinese of even modest educational attainment that there is a far greater attention to and knowledge about the West among ordinary Chinese than there is awareness of China among Westerners'. The point has often been made with respect to inequalities between the US and Europe and the Third World. It is not that the First World does not know about the Third; arguably, in certain respects the First World knows more about the Third than the latter knows about itself. The

question is rather: who knows, what kind of knowledge and to what end? What is missing in most instances is interest in other ways of knowing. What Chinese thinkers have to say may matter to China specialists, but it would be hard to argue that it is of general intellectual interest—and the specialists themselves may have something to gain from exaggerating the contributions of Chinese intellectuals to contemporary thought, which may in fact add up to little more than the transfer of the Gao Xingjian syndrome in literature to the realms of social criticism and philosophy.

Colonial legacies of power are important to this asymmetrical relationship, as is the ideological hegemony that continues to underwrite them. It is also necessary to note what I would describe as the 'Middle Kingdom' mentality that continues to prevail among Chinese intellectuals—not in the ordinary misleading usage of a haughty disregard for the world, but rather in the sense of an obsessive and narrowly conceived preoccupation with China and its relationship to the 'West'. The reluctance of Chinese intellectuals to speak on general world issues, even as the PRC is headed for world-power status, is a striking characteristic of most of their writing. So is the exclusive China-West focus, commonplace in these discussions, which suggests obliviousness to the world that exists outside of a China-West space—one that reifies both China and the West, even among confirmed deconstructionists and postmodernists. Ironically, conferences on globalization (which have become a minor industry in the PRC) also remain trapped within this particular matrix and are generally restricted to participants from China, North America and Europe, not even extending to neighbouring societies, let alone more remote Third World nations. Many Chinese intellectuals, in other words, are complicit in the fetishization of Euro-America and the legitimization of the power relationships they would criticize. They contribute, in their own way, to the perpetuation of inequalities in world knowledge, not just between Euro-America and China, but also between China and the rest of the world. This is quite a difference from the radical past when, whatever the realities, Chinese intellectuals at least aspired to challenge intellectual and cultural disparities, within a revolutionary society that sought to transform global class-power relations. It is important for the world to have access to the thinking of Chinese intellectuals; in overcoming Euro-American hegemony, it is equally important for PRC intellectuals to engage a world of culture and ideas that is not bound by inherited geographies of power.

It is not only intellectuals in the PRC who are oblivious to this problem, but also PRC promoters in the US and Europe, who seem to be constitutionally incapable of accepting that China is just like any other society which, in the particular mode of its escape from domination, visits devastation on others. It is important, not just for the PRC but for the world at large, that the country be 'worlded'. *One China, Many Paths* offers examples of the

kind of thinking associated with the most progressive sectors in the PRC. It also provides eloquent testimonial to the limitations set by past and present hegemonies on Chinese thinkers' abilities to provide intellectual leadership on a host of contemporary problems that are not just Chinese but global in both their sources and their consequences. There are writers who are willing to challenge us depredations on the global scene and oppose the legacies of colonialism. Their voices are heard in this volume only marginally, as most of the contributors are preoccupied with questions of left or centrist liberalism, in which the radical inheritance of the past appears merely as a spectral presence, desubstantiated in its translation into the language of academic politics.

Contemporary Chinese intellectuals face problems produced by a specific social and political environment, but they also confront many of the same questions as the rest of us, even if they encounter them under different circumstances. We need to recognize the ways in which they have been repeatedly abused for daring to be social critics, or just for being different. It is equally important not to let memories of political repression stand in the way of efforts to expand the realm of freedom in the future, when past experiences may in fact catapult Chinese intellectuals to the forefront of struggles for greater liberties. They, in turn, have to learn to speak in another language, not just the language of nations and states, but the language of democracy and justice that has a relevance beyond Chinese political and cultural boundaries. The thinkers in this volume speak in such a language. But to achieve the well-deserved recognition of their activities as critical intellectuals, they need to make a greater effort at overcoming their self-imposed limitations in participating in the global (not just 'Western') dialogue.

Alex Woloch, *The One vs the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel*

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RACHEL MALIK

## 'WE ARE TOO MENNY'

Character is an unfashionable subject within the current *doxa* of literary studies, and one of the many strengths of Alex Woloch's study is his unabashed facing of the problem head-on. Naïve responses that treat characters as people and pay no attention to the processes of representation are easy targets; but the seemingly non-gullible alternatives are, for Woloch, equally evasive. Character cannot be reduced to theme, or rhetorical figure, or an action-potential within the plot, any more than it can be simply read off (and perhaps seen off) as an ideological position. Such strategies should always be part of how we read character, but they do not, on their own, grapple with the anthropomorphism of characters, who so often seem to exist beyond the repertoire of gestures, actions, thoughts and words in which they are inscribed. Character is a myth in Barthes's sense (though Woloch himself treats Barthes rather peremptorily), and must be read as at once true and unreal. We need to accept the true force of character: why readers can treat characters as people (or even intimates), speculating about their pre-and-post narrative 'lives'. But we must also explain it, as a constituent and effect of the textual process.

The place of minor characters, from Dickens's memorable 'gargoyles' (as Orwell termed them) to the blank servants behind 'dinner was served', lay bare the problem of character most acutely, and Woloch rejects a wide variety of critical responses in forging his own argument about them. Minor characters cannot be conceived as a failure of representation—the static, even stuffed, quality of 'Austen's men' would be one example. Nor can they be written off as not meriting the attention that the protagonist deserves. Minor characters cannot be viewed exclusively as foils for major characters,

as figures for the protagonist's dilemmas or unconscious desires (though they often also function in this way). Nor are minor characters 'really' major characters: Bertha Mason is not the 'real' heroine of *Jane Eyre*. This is not a book about unsung heroes but rather about the processes of 'unsinging'. Woloch insists on minor characters as just that. His concern is with the literary processes—distortion, compression, dispatch—that constitute them as minor, or 'flat' (a term he develops from Forster). In one of many brilliantly defamiliarizing moments, Woloch defines the undeveloped minor character as one whose subjectivity has not been fully 'effaced'. The protagonist's interest, the way that narrative attention is distributed and redistributed, is as much a *formal* as an ethical question. And whilst minor characters may function as (developmental) foils to the protagonist, such formulas resist the fundamental interdependency of the two.

For Woloch, the emergence of a central protagonist as a self-reflective consciousness in the realist novel is structured by the 'minoring' or *subordination* of other characters within the narrative structure. The many varieties of minor character who jostle for attention, from the rigorously constrained parodies of Austen to Dickens's compressed grotesques, are the necessary textual effects of the protagonist's rich and complex interiority, so strongly marked in the classic fiction of this period. *The One vs the Many* explores an epoch—between about 1810 and 1865—of general novelistic innovation, centring on three writers—Austen, Dickens and Balzac—who, for Woloch, are explicitly interested in the narrative questions posed by character. His thesis calls for a very detailed mapping of character relations, and three of his four main chapters are devoted to close studies of single novels: *Pride and Prejudice*, *Great Expectations* and *Le Père Goriot*. These are complemented by a number of fascinating excursions, on Henry James, George Eliot, Shakespeare, Sophocles and the *Iliad*; a roll-call which summons up Auerbach's *Mimesis*, an important intertext for Woloch's book.

The structural dialectic between major and minor is clearly demonstrated in Woloch's probing and original account of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Elizabeth's emergence as the protagonist, which is not a given at the outset, is only possible through the 'minoring' of those around her, and in particular her four sisters. Her coming-to-be as a reflective and critical agent, as a *rounded* character, has as its necessary counterpart, the flattening and subordination of others. Elizabeth's judgements of her family and, crucially a less stable and circumscribed acquaintance, enable her to extract and abstract social characteristics. This process of exacting evaluation simultaneously constructs her fullness, as a thinking, conscious being and delimits and distorts the social world around her, creating an asymmetry or imbalance between characters which becomes a typical structure for the nineteenth-century novel.

It is in this context that we can start to make sense of Woloch's argument that 'minor characters are the proletariat of the novel' and his concepts of character-space and character-system. The rounded character is not a naively imputed individual but the liberal subject inscribed in the Rights of Man. The asymmetry produced by the dialectic of round and flat is the registration of both the possible completeness of all, and the knowledge that individual development is achievable only at the necessary cost of the subordination of the many. Character-space is the intersection between this inherent individual potential and the determined space of the narrative as a whole; the character-system is the arrangement of these 'multiple and differentiated character-spaces'. Elizabeth's emergence as the protagonist, distinguishable from her sisters and from the blur of other young women, is predicated on the marriage market, where the general instability of social relations in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century is especially acute. For Woloch, this context is played out in the conflict between an individual marriage plot of which Elizabeth is the chief beneficiary, and the insecurities and dangers governing the marriage market as a whole. One woman's security is gained at the cost of potentially uncountable others—the many. The two most important minor characters, Elizabeth's youngest and most irresponsible sister, Lydia, and the seducer-adventurer Wickham, embrace the dangers of this larger social world and, for Woloch, represent the forces of social multiplicity that threaten the protagonist but are convincingly constrained by the end of the novel.

Competition is also a central feature in Woloch's analyses of Dickens and Balzac's *Père Goriot*, where he binds the various modes of being major and minor more explicitly to the relations between capital and labour. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth's interiority emerges in the narrative process of the novel, which itself dramatizes the coming-to-be of the protagonist. For Dickens, in contrast, the novelistic protagonist is always already a given. Dickens is interesting to Woloch because the often weak protagonist's interiority is threatened by social exteriority and, above all, multiplicity. In *Great Expectations*, Pip is frequently silenced, confused, and even overwhelmed by his encounters with others. In becoming a gentleman, Pip is bound inextricably to a seemingly endless chain of subordinated others: from lawyers and clerks to tailors and servers. Distorted, compressed, and frequently only ever half-visible, these minor characters are the necessary condition of Pip's development, his *Bildung*, and in turn gesture to the greater multitude of the modern industrial city that can never be fully grasped. Distortion and flatness become so extreme that they become foregrounded: 'the minor character's significance rests in—not against—his insignificance; his strange prominence is inseparable from his obscurity'.

Through his analysis of Dickens, Woloch identifies the two types of minor character who 'people' the novels of the period: the worker and the eccentric. Both are read as embedded in a variety of discourses about the urban industrial working class (Engels, Marx, Mayhew). The minor character as a narrative worker is distorted, just as labour is reduced to its minimum functionality for maximum efficiency. The gallery of Dickensian characters, compressed to a series of repetitious phrases, gestures, actions, is a particularly clear instance. The eccentric minor character is the other side of the coin: the working-class dissipation and criminality suppressed and constituted by functionality that always threaten to overturn a precarious social and narrative order. In narrative terms, eccentrics explode into the text, disordering it: Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre* is a defining case. In *Great Expectations*, Pip is bound to both types; most specifically, his wealth is predicated on the criminality that banished his benefactor Magwitch to Australia to make his millions. Within this socio-narrative context, Woloch argues that Magwitch's homecoming represents the worker returning to claim the wealth he has produced. There is something to be said for this thesis, for Magwitch has certainly made Pip. But this argument can only be pressed so far, for Magwitch has done what labour cannot—accumulate capital. And in winning his passport out of the doomed repetitive time of the Dickensian worker-character, he changes.

Woloch's limited reading of Magwitch is in part an effect of his limited engagement with the *temporal* dimensions that shape character. This is, predominantly a book about space: character-space, the processes of compression and expansion, and the dangers of overcrowding (though it is surprising that Woloch only considers the crowd as it is figured in particular characters, and not representations of *collective* agency as such). Woloch seems to equate Dickens's distinctive, partly obscured vision of the many exclusively with their overwhelming quantity. But the constitutive distortion of minor characters is also shaped by an attempt to record the *accelerated* quality of modern life: a few words scrawled in a notebook before the subject vanishes. Poe dramatizes this acceleration in *The Man of the Crowd*, where the narrator's pursuit of an unclassifiable figure generates a feverish energy and exhaustion as he rushes after him through the night. Think also of the technological apparatus brought to bear by the forces of good to capture that quintessentially modern monster, Dracula: shorthand and stenograph. Dracula not only wants to 'pass' in the metropolitan crowd, he is energized by it and, perversely of course, rejuvenated by the sheer pace of modernity.

In Balzac's *Père Goriot* likewise, the unique, developmental time of Rastignac, the ambitious young man from the rural South (and one of the possible protagonists), is constantly undermined by the Parisian *everyday*,

where everyone's life proceeds according to type as a repetition of someone else's story. Balzac completes the elegant scheme of Woloch's argument. In Austen the idea of the protagonist is in the making, and its achievement is the constraining of the many; in Dickens the novelistic protagonist is an established category but vulnerable to social multiplicity. In Balzac, the concept of the protagonist is in place but seems unable to name and possess a single character. Is Rastignac, the obvious hero-antihero, the protagonist, or is it Père Goriot, whose life is retold through him? Or is it Vautrin, whose predictive narrative abilities seem to encompass the whole potential of Parisian life? In Balzac, social multiplicity finally comes to the centre as the centre. We are only ever amongst types: 'the kind of woman who', 'the sort of man that'; a process extending to actions, thoughts and emotions—each of them only ever one of a set that has been, and will be, endlessly repeated. Yet this centring on social multiplicity creates other instabilities. For Woloch, the type is not merely a representative of a class-fraction, à la Lukács. Any character's typicality is an effect of the fragmented and over-populated field in which they find themselves. Rastignac's fantastical aspirational desires make sense only in a world where competition is likely to leave his dreams unrealized.

Balzac also requires us to reconsider Woloch's account of the relations between fullness and distortion, interiority and exteriority. With persuasive originality, Woloch challenges us to think about 'flatness' as a strategy of representation which speaks to a specific historical context. This effects another of those brilliant defamiliarizations, but leaves the rounded character rather too securely in its place. Just before Vautrin is taken into custody as the arch-criminal of all criminals, his red hair—carefully concealed by dark wigs up to this point—is exposed: 'They say that redheads are very good or very bad'. Woloch mentions physiognomy a number of times, but he does not consider the place of physiognomical discourse in so many novels of this period. Madame Vauquer's comment about redheads is a typical, if crude, version of the ambivalent status that physiognomy has in Dickens, Wilkie Collins, Eliot, Gaskell and others, but its presence signifies. Physiognomy asserts a very different linkage between interior and exterior: that of continuity. Sometimes the exterior is all we need: there is no necessary effacement of the interior because the exterior maps it perfectly. Emerging out of the same anxieties about unknowable urban crowds that Woloch identifies in Dickens, physiognomy purports to offer a solution. And its absence as a discourse here points to some more general problems.

In his analysis of Austen, Woloch makes too quick an equation between individuation, as a narrative process, and the classic liberal agent, equipped with the knowledge to judge and choose. There is no account here of the textual work that the Burkean social order performs as it is inscribed in the

synecdochic form of the family, although this is the order to which Austen's novels are overwhelmingly committed. Competition within the marriage market is acute, but it is not exclusively individual. One sister's foolishness and immorality taints all. Darcy, already a symbolic father to his much younger sister and his estate, must right Lydia's plight if he is to marry Elizabeth. In this sense, the Bennet family as a whole (parents included) remain a singularity. The brilliant convenience is that by pleasing herself and judging for herself, Elizabeth also provides security for the entire unit. This is even more explicit in *Emma*. The eponymous heroine is certainly self-centred, but her *Bildung* is the learning of the social responsibilities that accompany her position. Emma's individualistic caprices meddle with and, on occasion, threaten to overturn the social order and it is these she must be cured of, not just for her own sake but for 'Highbury', which is only a metonym of society in general.

The family, understood in very different terms, is also largely absent from Woloch's analysis of Dickens, and here the aporia indicates a more general problem with his method. Like Lucien Goldmann, Woloch posits a homological relation between social structures and aesthetic ones. The strength of this approach is the focus on formal narrative processes, and in this vein Woloch interestingly notices the ways in which minor characters tend to proliferate at the end of Dickens's narratives: a profusion which complicates resolution. But he also neglects the kinds of resolution—however tentative—that Dickens offers. In *Great Expectations*, it is the revelation of a set of relations which are precisely *not* perverse, unlimited and finally unknowable that completes the narrative. Molly, Magwitch and Estella, who are perhaps the most difficult characters to classify and connect, turn out to be bound by natural and nameable ties: Estella is Molly and Magwitch's long-lost daughter. These relations are certainly an effect of the distorted social world the novel maps, but they also offer a fragile alternative to the dominant vision of the novel. Magwitch's generosity to Pip is, in significant part, prompted by the loss of his daughter and he dies consoled when he learns that she still lives. Woloch's approach cannot encompass the notion of competing discourses within the text. The family as redemptive, a moment of respite from capitalism or industrialism (as well as highly vulnerable to these forces) is a staple of nineteenth-century novelistic discourse. This discourse cannot simply be exposed or ignored; it is another myth, which needs to be read as both true (in its real social and cultural force) and unreal.

A richer and more fully rhetorical definition of the *textual* is called for, including, first, a more precise definition of genre. This book seems to be all about genre: the novel, realism and, most consistently, the realist novel are all proposed as such. But none of these are genres in the strict sense. In

*The Architext*, Gérard Genette defines a genre as an intersection between a particular mode of enunciation and a particular content. Romance and the detective novel are two canonical examples, indicating not only certain types of event, but crucially, their ordering, emphasis (the discovery of the body, the many replays of the murder scene) and the perspectives from which the events are viewed (romance's centring on feminine experience, for example). The novel is a highly successful and adaptable *institution*, its very adaptability tied to its historical emergence and development as a commodity. It is best defined as a historically specific set of publishing processes—an issue to which I will return. Its history encompasses a myriad of genres, but realism is not one of them. (On this sheer variety, see Franco Moretti's 'Graphs, Maps, Trees' in *NLR* 24.) Realism is a *mode* of representation, one that cuts across institutions, forms and media. It significantly, but not exclusively, shapes narrational possibilities but it does not determine a distinctive type of story (though it would seem to proscribe some). The 'realist novel' is an under-specified category in narrative terms.

Conceived as a mode, however, realism could extend the possibilities of Woloch's character-system model, for which he suggestively claims a more general validity across media. More specifically, in his conclusion, he argues that the continuities between nineteenth and twentieth-century character-space ' belie the rupture. . . so often posited between realist and modernist fiction'. This is indeed persuasive but such continuities are also part of the broader history of realism. Realism is a highly versatile and enduring mode of representation, refuelled by various avant-gardes, rather than fatally damaged. It arguably remains the dominant in most literary, 'middle-brow' and mass-market novels, and in film and tv. The constitutive dynamic that Woloch identifies between major and minor characters is central to realist modes of representation, which must gesture to the many. The plays of Beckett and Pinter are not realist in significant part because there are no minor characters. Distortion and effacement belong to a more general realist strategy whose effect is always to suggest that there is more than what has been said or told: a form of the representative that suggests a surplus (of the same order) beyond it. Contemporary realisms open up further versions of the major-minor relation. In soap opera, for example, where narrative attention is constantly redistributed amongst a relatively large group of characters, a minor character can be grown into a major one. A major character can also be temporarily minored, compressed to a typical pose and reaction, but his or her major potential only ever lies dormant, waiting to return. Further, realism intersects with the production processes of different media and institutions in a variety of ways, sometimes with surprising effects. Contemporary film and tv adaptations of branded comic superheroes are faced with the problem that, although Superman and his

kind are strong protagonists, they are only minor characters: distorted to their special skills (always carefully explained) and single, special purpose of saving the world—which itself has to be maintained in recognizable realist terms. The characteristic playing-up of the superhero's realist disguise in these films and programmes is the resolution of this dilemma: Clark Kent *can* develop and change.

If realism is a mode of representation, what then of genre? Woloch does not dismiss genre-centred accounts of character, but argues that, like many other approaches, genre-based analyses can tend to jump the set of questions that character-space and system propose. Genre, and other more conventional interpretations of character (above all psychological), are for Woloch most productive within the context of these concepts. It is true that, unlike many modes of character analysis, his does not uncouple character from the narrative as a whole. But here there also seems to be a problematic prioritization of sequences or levels of analysis, suggesting an estimation of critical procedures and texts in terms of their distance from or proximity to the primary reality of the 'base'. Generic, aesthetic, thematic, psychological and ideological interpretations are so many translations (however illuminating) of the form of class relations that the narrative reconstructs. Within this context, Woloch's characterizations of the relation between text and history as *refractive* or *inflective*, although making a space for the formal work of writing, are fundamentally evasive.

But is genre really only one more interpretative possibility in the way that Woloch proposes? Central to narrative, genre governs the possibilities of character and character relations, and this opens up the *rhetorical* nature of the text, its relations with other texts and contexts, more fully. Further, genre enriches our understanding of the various ways in which interiority, or 'roundness', is represented, and of its constitutive relations with the flat. Returning to *Great Expectations*, I would foreground the centrality of gothic as a genre within the novel, not only as the shaper of a temporal order—the past repeatedly returns—but for its role in governing the processes of characterization. Pip's overwhelming by the complex social world is shaped by a distinctively gothic subjectivity. Many of his attempts to understand the world are generically Fantastic in Todorov's sense: Pip is faced with a classificatory uncertainty as to the status of the object he is perceiving. The first encounter with Miss Havisham is a classic instance. She does not only or most importantly signify 'faded youth', as Woloch suggests, but the crisis presented by the living dead (a waxwork, a clothed skeleton), and it is this gothic dynamic between perceiver and perceived that constitutes their relations. But *Great Expectations* is also in part a proto-detective novel, and for much of it Pip is a very poor detective. The complex metonymic chains that Woloch identifies, linking capital and labour, are also *dues* to the identity of

Pip's benefactor and the dubious nature of (his) wealth. One of the central genre shifts is the retuning of Pip's interiority, as his unstable Gothic subjectivity is increasingly supplanted by the certainties of forensic observation. It is he who solves the mystery of who Estella's mother is, by identifying the hereditary connexion with Molly (they share the same hands).

Conceiving character as governed by genre in this way depends on viewing texts as *intertextual*: a variation and transformation of existing texts and genres. Intertextuality is present as a concept in *The One vs the Many*, but it is not fully metabolized, foreclosing various ways in which character relations could be further developed. This seems to be a consequence of Woloch's rigid eschewal of any kind of post-structuralist thinking—a sympathetic position in certain ways. The forced growth of the marginal to absurd consequence; reading against the grain to a point of perversity; the hyperbolizing of the textual as what is always fundamentally unstable and fragmentary—all these cut against the claim of contextual specificity that such readings routinely make, leaving aside the often scanty textual evidence on which they are based. Woloch's readings take the whole text on in immensely satisfying ways, insisting on each's part in the narrative structure of the whole, and this is no small achievement when dealing with a writer such as Dickens.

But there is a price to be paid. Woloch insists too strongly on the unity of the text as an achieved (as opposed to desired) structure, and this renders him hostile in general to 'resistant' readings, whatever their goals and strategies, just as he is unwilling to see competing and irreconcilable discourses. For example, Woloch is brilliant at assessing the various modes of dispatching minor characters, for which the children's suicide note in *Jude the Obscure*, 'Done because we are too menny', might stand as metaphor. But he never considers the characters that the text cannot dispatch. What about Jackie Bast, Leonard's unrepresentable working-class wife in Forster's *Howards End*? After her husband's death, she and her presumably parlous state are never mentioned. This is not the dispatch of a minor character: the novel simply cannot encompass her in its resolution. The intertextual relations between genres within a text can open up richer ways of exploring how interiority is represented and related to both exteriority and minority—as in the case of Pip's gradually discarded gothic interiority. Just as Woloch argues that the dominant protagonist constitutes subordinated minor characters, there is usually a dominant genre (or genres) within the text that will subordinate the others. The later novels of Henry James offer an interesting twist to the highly versatile gothic. In James, gothic interiority is not, as it is so often in Dickens, what has to be renounced (even as it may find a new 'host' in other children, symbolic or literal), but a mode of representing acute psychic instabilities and conflicts. In *The Wings of the Dove*, the American

heiress Milly Theale has the uncanny experience of 'seeing' her friend Kate Croy as if she were looking at the absent man they jointly but secretly love, Merton Densher. Densher's spectral presence registers the conflictual subject positions that Milly occupies within this triad: as a fantasizing voyeur in a relationship she is excluded from, as the subject of her desire for Densher and, in Densher's position, as the subject of her (impossible) desire for Kate. But the gothic takes its form from its subordinated position within the genres of the novel and in particular, one of its dominants: naturalism. And James would make an interesting addition to Woloch's corpus. For in his novels, with their excessive attention to interiority, we are still only ever a moment, a circumstance, a minor character away from a social type: Isabel Archer could have been Henrietta Stackpole, Gilbert Osmond could have been Edward Rosier.

I have suggested that the novel is an institution defined by the historically specific processes of publishing. This is the other sense in which texts, genres and characters need to be understood in a fully rhetorical sense. Any genre, any text is governed by what I have elsewhere termed 'the horizon of the publishable', what it is thinkable to publish within a given historical situation. This horizon is neither a singular nor an autonomous logic defined by the 'industry'. Rather it is defined in the relations between the processes of publishing and other institutions—commercial, legal, political, educational, cultural—and, most obviously, other media. It constitutes what it is possible to write and, significantly, how it is written, marketed, edited, designed and produced. In this sense publishing always precedes writing.

Thus, returning briefly to Dickens and his minor characters, we need to situate his writing within the processes of publishing of the period and the broader horizon in which they operate. It is a truism that one of Dickens's preferred strategies for constituting characters is through dialectal and idiolectal variation and exaggeration. But what part of this is governed by the relations between publishing, other media and the institutions and practices of reading? Arguably a rather large part. It is not just that Dickens was a highly successful dramatic reader or performer, in Britain and America. The relations between stage and novel were highly synergistic at this time, with official and pirated adaptations of novels staged hot on the heels of publication. Theatrical writing was both an established model and an ambition for many novelists because it could be so lucrative. Likewise, reading aloud was a central practice within recreational and improving reading, in significant part because of patterns of literacy. Do not these contexts, only briefly sketched, go some significant way to explain the highly distinctive modes of speech of Dickens's characters (minor in particular)? These processes are not mere circumstances or enrichments, of the kind that conventional book-history canonically proposes. They are constituents of the historical horizon

of the publishable which *constitutes* writing. This particular variety of the written-to-be-read aloud is not a refraction of 'real' social relations: it is always already inscribed and constituted in these relations, through that horizon.

I outline these positions in criticism of *The One vs the Many*, yet in a form that is already indebted to Woloch's bold undertaking. This book insists on questions that have been skirted or marginalized, but cannot be made to go away.

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Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*,  
ed., Gareth Stedman Jones  
Penguin: London 2002, £4.99, paperback  
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JACOB STEVENS

## EXORCIZING THE MANIFESTO

Canonized by the Penguin Classics imprint, the latest edition of the *Communist Manifesto* is dwarfed by a 185-page introduction, described by its author as 'an excavation of the intellectual antecedents of Marxist thought'. Serious archaeology on such a scale is to be welcomed, although the forty-odd pages of the *Manifesto* may seem a slender basis from which to mount such an exercise; and indeed, Stedman Jones here shows little interest in the text itself. Though praising the invocation of capitalism's prodigious revolutionizing and universalizing powers in the first section, 'Bourgeoisie and Proletarians', he sees a descent into bathos in the second, 'Proletarians and Communists', which advocates the overthrow of capitalist property relations, the abolition of the bourgeois family, the end of the 'exploitation of one nation by another' and the 'radical rupture with traditional ideas'. The third part, 'Socialist and Communist Literature', is 'arbitrary and sectarian', while the fourth, outlining the communists' position in relation to existing opposition parties, is 'hurriedly jotted' and 'unfinished'.

Instead, the importance of the *Manifesto* in Stedman Jones's reading is rather that it epitomizes Marxism's fundamental error: the break away from an explicit humanism towards a materialist and determinist analysis. The structure of the argument is an inverted skeleton of Althusser's: the mistake of Marx and Engels was to decry all former religious and ethical influences and to deny ideas a role in history; but this departure from humanism was fundamentally an exercise in self-deception. Their hostility to Stirner's Romantic individualism—also pivotal for Althusser—isolated them from these healthy currents, and they could only attempt to sneak in their normative humanist commitments via a set of increasingly elaborate evasions and

erasures. 'In the drafting of the Manifesto, any reference to these ideas . . . disappeared'; yet, as an inspiration to political action, it continued to draw, illicitly, on this ethical and religious background. Despite its secular façade, Marxism is to be categorized as an 'organized post-Christian religion'.

The substance of the case for this reading of the Manifesto is argued in the form of a genealogy, with the religious element in each current of thought brought into the foreground. Over the course of the text this method results in a slightly disorientating staccato effect, as each section brings the reader up to the point of publication in 1848, before tracking back to the next tributary. The reader is presented, therefore, with the repeated discovery of a 'new' religious lineage: the polemical effect is to discourage any chronological construction of intellectual history; including, perhaps especially, the secularizing narrative of the Manifesto itself. The traditional view that Marxism emerged out of a tripartite meeting of French socialism, German philosophy and British political economy is reworked: the religious influences within the first two, not yet exorcized by the time of the Manifesto, are deceptively cloaked by Marx and Engels in the language of social progress and political economy. The German Historical School of Law provides a fourth strand, offering a historicized conception of property regimes and examples of different forms of common ownership. The abolition of private property under communism is grounded, interestingly, in the notion of 'negative community'.

Stedman Jones traces the use of the term 'communist' to the radical French republican clubs—the *Société des Droits de l'Homme*, in particular—that emerged during the July Revolution, drawing explicitly on Jacobin and Babeuvist traditions. Faced with repression, some—such as Blanqui's *Société des Saisons*—went underground, while others became open advocates of a reworked 'communism', as an 'ostensibly peaceful and apolitical surrogate for the forbidden idea of an egalitarian republic': notably, Cabet in his *Voyage to Icaria*. German communism, in contrast, was formulated in exile, as the economic depression of the 1830s and 40s drove artisans to Paris, London, Brussels, Zurich or Geneva. In 1840 Karl Schapper, Joseph Moll and five others established the London-based German Workers' Educational Association, which would provide an important component of the Communist League that, in 1847, commissioned the Manifesto.

In the face of what he perceives as the received account, attributed to Engels—that the 'artisan communism' of the League had little influence on the Manifesto—Stedman Jones is keen to highlight the debates that took place there. He argues that all these groups were influenced by a revived Christian radicalism in 1830s France, and particularly by the works of Lamennais: 'the impact of these books on the European mainland can probably only be compared with that once made by Tom Paine in the English-speaking world'.

There were a series of debates on these issues within the League, partly in response to the atheist influences of Owenism and Young Hegelianism. Cabet's proposals for communist settlements were eventually rejected, as was Weitling's call, traced here to Lamennais, for violent revolution: both were deemed premature. By 1846, when the headquarters of the League moved to London, Schapper had argued for a separation of religious and political questions, and insisted, in a clear precursor to the prescriptions of the *Manifesto*, that 'communism should above all enable the free self-development of individuals'. As the artisans' networks splintered between Weitling, Cabet and Proudhon, the London-based leadership invited Marx and Engels to meet them in 1847 as part of an effort 'to draw into the League other elements of the Communist movement'.

The influences of Young Hegelianism on Marxist thought, discussed at length by Marx and Engels themselves, constitute perhaps the most widely explored element of their intellectual background. Stedman Jones's account carefully follows the evolution of the group, from the publications of David Strauss and Arnold Ruge on the 'rationalization' of Christianity, through Bruno Bauer's deconstruction of the historical claims of the Gospels and his expulsion from Bonn. He documents Marx's move from academia to the *Rheinische Zeitung*, and finally Marx and Engels's collective response to Feuerbach and Stirner's work. Stedman Jones is keen to stress the extent to which the teleological nature of Hegel's system—its most 'obviously vulnerable metaphysical assumption'—is retained in Marx and Engels's thinking. The concept of alienated labour, as opposed to Feuerbach's 'species being', leads to a historicization of their account of alienation and emancipation; but this historical process is argued to be 'no less purposive than that found in Hegel'—and indeed, 'scarcely less indebted to its ancestry in Protestant thought'. Within the history of property regimes and their effects there still lurked the 'true natural history of man', merely cloaked in the 'scientific and economic-sounding relationship between the forces and relations of production'.

Stedman Jones is surely overpitching his case when he describes Marx and Engels's reaction to Stirner's 1844 critique, *The Ego and Its Own*, as 'thermo-nuclear', with commensurate 'collateral damage'. Stirner had argued that Feuerbach's attempt to reclaim the attributes of God for Man did not succeed in reattributing them to human individuals, but merely shifted them to another ideal construct: the 'essence of Man'. Just like the Protestant God, this idealized notion—fundamentally derived from 'the tearing apart of Man into natural impulse and conscience'—also stood above men as their 'vocation'. Marx is explicitly identified by Stirner with the demand that 'I become a real generic Man'. His response, according to Stedman Jones, 'was to divest *all* ideas of any autonomous role whatsoever' in *The German Ideology*:

'morality, religion, metaphysics and all the rest of ideology as well as the forms of consciousness corresponding to these . . . no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development.' (Here as elsewhere, Stedman Jones permits himself broad licence in the truncation and repunctuation of quotations; a definitive full-stop replaces Marx's semi-colon, and the famous peroration that follows: 'but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their actual world, also their thinking and the products of their thinking. It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness.')

Instead, political economy will be pressed in to take the place of ideology. The notion of the division of labour is improbably portrayed as a straightforward substitute: 'as a result of his reading of *The Wealth of Nations*, Marx replaced the still somewhat abstract opposition between 'alienated labour' and Man's 'species being' by Adam Smith's conception of the development of the division of labour'. In Smith's insight, Stedman Jones's Marx sees a dynamic process that can unfold in 'antagonistic conjunction' with 'the true natural history of Man', now described as 'the development of Man's "productive forces"'. (The degree to which the concept of alienated labour might inform *Capital's* account of capitalist exploitation is left untouched.) The image of a communist form of property that animates the *Manifesto* as a political goal derives, it is argued, from a combination of seventeenth-century natural law debates and the historicized conception of property relations developed by the German Historical School of Law. Marx was acquainted both through discussions with his lawyer father and through his own undergraduate studies with the challenge this School mounted to the Napoleonic codification of the absolute rights of private property, chiefly by way of a set of historical comparisons—especially Roman and Greek—that highlighted alternative forms: tribal, collective and, subsequently, state ownership. Stedman Jones suggests that in *The German Ideology* Marx reworked the findings of Niebuhr, Hugo and Pfister, in connection with successive stages in the division of labour.

Less convincingly, seventeenth-century natural law debates are seen as refracted through Proudhon, the Scottish conjectural historians or, more generally, 'dispersed in an array of social and political debates occasioned by the French Revolution'. Partly in order to avoid the political implications drawn by the Levellers and others from the scholastic tradition—that God had given the earth for mankind to hold in common—an account of 'negative community' had been developed by Grotius and Pufendorf as a stage that preceded *any* notion of property, whether private or communal. This primeval stage was dominated by the satisfaction of needs, and a notion of rights (and hence property) was argued to have emerged once population growth necessitated the division, hence differential reward, of labour.

Following the work of Hont and Ignatieff, and Emma Rothschild, Stedman Jones traces the views of Grotius and Pufendorf through to Adam Smith: this is at least a plausible lineage. But to argue that their notion of 'negative community' animates Marx and Engels, with no direct textual evidence—amidst a wealth of detailed research into forms of property—would seem to contradict every word in the *Manifesto* and thereafter about the nature of utopian socialism. If the aim is to find intellectual forerunners for the political and economic demands made by Marx and Engels in the *Manifesto*, there are far stronger grounds for citing Fichte's *Closed Commercial State*, published in 1800, which advocated a wholly nationalized economy, with extensive regulation and government control of a closed paper-money supply. Although Stedman Jones footnotes a letter in which Marx says that he is grappling with Fichte, this avenue is left unexplored.

The three components that constituted Marx's conception of communism at the time of the *Manifesto*, Stedman Jones argues, were:

first, an apocalyptic reading of Smith's theory of the division of labour, in which the progress of commercial society had turned towards self-destruction, second, the assumption that the modern bourgeois form of private property, like the previous forms of property discussed by the Historical School, was ephemeral; and third, the assumption that modern industry and 'the automatic system' were creating a new epoch of abundance relative to human need and comparable to, though infinitely richer than, the first primeval stage of human history.

In the years that followed, this notion would begin to disintegrate. Firstly, a mention of 'the labour time necessary for the satisfaction of absolute needs' in the *Grundrisse* is taken as a tacit admission that this would need to be allocated, reintroducing the 'government of men' in place of the 'administration of things'. Secondly, the concept of 'use value' in *Capital* was a 'direct and authentic characterization of human need concealed beneath the trafficking of the market'. A society based on use value, according to Stedman Jones, would need to be one in which the market was abolished, to be replaced by 'a rational plan worked out between the associated producers': 'Had he persisted through to the end with the concept of use value that he developed in the first and only completed volume of *Capital*, Marx would have been in danger of replacing capitalism with a pre-market form.' The last phase of Marx's life, buried in 'the intensive study of ancient, communal and pre-capitalist forms', was marked by his failure to develop a theory of modern communism, and his resulting inability to complete *Capital*. The *Manifesto* promise, of 'an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all', turned out to be an 'uncashable cheque'. Implausibly, Stedman Jones imputes to Marx and Engels the view

that the abolition of bourgeois property relations would necessarily involve the total abolition of the market. In light of the Manifesto's demand for 'a heavy progressive or graduated income tax'—nowhere in existence, at the time of writing—it would seem that some form of market must survive. If the Manifesto's vision of the path to a communist society can be argued to be teleological, it can only implausibly be held to harken back to a mythical Golden Age.

The overarching theme, then, of Stedman Jones's account is that communism was constituted by a normative, largely religiously inspired, vision of a future society, disguised, after Stirner's critique, in determinist, economic terminology. It is his view, as a result of this 'deception' reading, that by the time of the Manifesto the trap has been set: the combination of religious and utopian commitments and a mistaken and dogmatic determinist materialism leads directly to the 'debacle' of *Capital*. It is, of course, a reading that necessitates a refusal to take Marx and Engels at their own word throughout. There is no attempt to engage with the Manifesto's own description of the disenchanting process of capitalist development—the argument that the critique of religion, as of ethics, law, politics and the state, was now possible as never before, when:

All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind

Stedman Jones pays little attention to the manifesto as a form, both political and literary. Here, his scanting of the two final sections of the Manifesto is important. Their political role, in drawing a boundary between the world-historical force of international, revolutionary communism and its utopian competitors, is barely acknowledged; the astonishing changes in register, as the text moves between different forms of argument and addresses various audiences, remain unexamined. It is precisely the break towards actual proletarian movements—away from sacred articles of belief—that makes the Manifesto a unique document in terms of political orientation and strategy. At both of these levels—political strategy and literary technique—an important predecessor is oddly absent from Stedman Jones's genealogy: Abbé Sieyès's 'What is the Third Estate?', of January 1789: a paradigm of revolutionary Enlightenment reason. Furet captured the tone of Sieyès's pamphlets: 'violent, categorical, taut as an arrow winging to its target and piercing old society in its vital spot—privilege'. Despite the Abbé's office, the argument is entirely secular. Beginning with the question of who produces the society's wealth, he argues that the Third Estate is:

the strong and robust man who has one arm still shackled . . . What is the Third Estate? Everything, but an everything shackled and oppressed. What would it be without the privileged order? Everything, but an everything free and flourishing.

Here we find clear forerunners of three crucial ideas: the universal role of an economic class, the chains that shackle it and the ultimate goal of the 'free and flourishing' development of all; set forth in the same style that causes Stedman Jones to regard the *Manifesto* as messianic. An article in the *Rheinische Zeitung* in 1842 shows that Marx was well aware of these pamphlets; yet, though steeped in French Revolutionary ideas, Stedman Jones neglects even to mention Sieyès. In one respect, perhaps, the pamphlets would distort the shape of his argument: they betray a part of the *Manifesto*'s intellectual heritage that cannot be reduced to pseudo-religious longing, being a product, instead, of the growing convergence of a range of debates about economic production and political representation.

The prospect of a detailed contextualization of Marx's thought, flagged in the introduction, evokes the approach to intellectual history of the 'Cambridge school' associated with the work of Quentin Skinner and J. G. A. Pocock. But in many respects Stedman Jones violates the basic canons of this kind of textual scholarship. A disingenuous slippage too often conflates the young Marx, or 1840s German artisans, with Leninism, Stalinism, or Soviet developmentalism. The tendentious approach to quotation, already mentioned with respect to *The German Ideology*, suggests an over-determining agenda rather than a disinterested excavation, and produces a picture that is both simplified and one-sided: ideology, religion and 'forms of consciousness' are indeed grounded in a materialist conception of forces of production and 'social forms of intercourse', but the determination is not all in one direction. The 'reciprocal action' of civil society, the state and forms of consciousness 'on one another' is stressed, and there are two halves to the statement, 'circumstances make men just as much as men make circumstances'.

But a far greater distortion of intellectual history is produced by Stedman Jones's determination to view *The German Ideology* as the last significant innovation in Marx's thought, and the *Manifesto* as representing a point of fundamentally arrested development. The religious legacies traced in the various currents feeding in to Marx and Engels's positions of 1847–48 are implausibly cast forward, encompassing *Capital* and the rest of their œuvre. A properly contextualized intellectual history would surely see these 1840s works as preliminary formulations, initial sketches of historical materialism, with the accent on economic determinism and the rooting of ideas in social forces. Their ultimate worth cannot be read out of the text of the *Manifesto* but comes from their later elaboration and contestation

in the intra-Marxist debates they initiated. When Gramsci or Sartre explore hegemony, or Marcuse and Gorz challenge the revolutionary destiny of the proletariat, they do so in ways that retain something of historical materialism. It is unsurprising that a political strategy concerned with the oppressed would stress material constraints and opportunities, especially after the political failure of a range of religiously inspired movements.

The Manifesto is better analysed as one milestone along a path of overlapping theoretical moves, travelling away from the religious, humanist or utopian forms of socialism that Marx and Engels openly disavow in its final sections. Stedman Jones's own description of Schapper in 1846, demanding a separation between religious and political questions—an account indebted to Christina Lattek's *Revolutionary Refugees*—would mark an early stage of this process. Political disagreements within the Young Hegelians and vital interactions with proletarian movements then fed into subsequent innovations. Stedman Jones' reading of *The German Ideology* as the last significant development would need to be substantiated by a demolition of *Capital* that hangs on more than a naturalistic interpretation of the concept of use value. It is not just that this is not done: the relevant territory is barely acknowledged. One useful and opposing view is Žižek's account, in NLR 25, of use value and exchange value as competing and irreconcilable perspectives.

Stedman Jones's organizing thesis—that Marxism is another form of religion—is, of course, one of the oldest tropes of Cold War literature, predating even the equation of communism and fascism as two sides of the totalitarian coin. During the thirties, Waldemar Gurian and Eric Voegelin argued that Marxism and Nazism caricatured the fundamental patterns of religious belief, diagnosing the resulting immanentist heresies as by-products of secularization in a decadent world, fuelled by Enlightenment myths of social transformation. After World War Two, Jules Monnerot's *Sociology of Communism* (1949) explained that Bolshevism was a 'religious sect of world conquerors' that should be viewed as a 'twentieth-century Islam'. Raymond Aron's *Opium of the Intellectuals* (1955) offered a fully fleshed-out analogy with Christianity: the 'sacred history which Marxism extracts from the penumbra of plain facts' offers a messianic role for the Party. Jacob Talmon's monumental *Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (1952) also tracks the intellectual heritage of the October Revolution to Saint-Just and Babeuf, then casting further back to Rousseau. Robert Tucker's *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (1962) saw in the 'religion of revolution' that Marx instituted a drama of salvation derived from Augustinian traditions of medieval Christianity. For Norman Cohn, on the contrary, it was the apocalyptic beliefs of the Anabaptists and their kind, luridly illustrated in his *Pursuit of the Millennium* (1957), which provided the key to the religious fanaticism of Communists and Nazis alike. Kolakowski's *Main Currents of Marxism* (1971)

laments this 'bogus form of religion' for having 'presented its eschatology as a scientific system, which religious mythologies do not purport to be'.

Many of these variants analyse political movements with a Durkheimian notion of religion: as providing a mechanism for solidarity or exclusion, or answering a psychological need for community in the face of rising individualism. Within the spectrum, however, there was always a distinction between those (Monnerot, Aron, Tucker) who regarded the verdict that Marxism was a form of religion as a self-sufficient condemnation, and those (Voegelin, Kolakowski) who wanted to preserve authentic religion as a realm of higher truth, of which Marx had merely produced a sinister caricature. Stedman Jones offers a lay version of the latter: by refusing to acknowledge the historical importance of transcendent ideals and ethical values in *The German Ideology*, Marx ended up producing an ersatz religion in the *Manifesto*. The movement that followed was necessarily fantastical and utopian. Although Stedman Jones avoids the pairing with Nazism, at its furthest stretch his argument seems to hold Marxist 'apocalysm' responsible for the twentieth century's world wars:

It was not the mere fact of proletarianization that generated the wars and revolutions of the twentieth century, but the experiences of social and political upheaval, shaped and articulated through the militant and apocalyptic languages of communism or revolutionary socialism. For this reason, historians have rightly likened the passions, intransigence and extremism of twentieth-century revolutions to the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In fact, the Revolution of October 1917 was, as Hobsbawm points out in *Age of Extremes*, a revolution against the war—'Bread, Land and Peace' was not exactly an apocalyptic slogan. In World War Two, the USSR was attacked by Nazi Germany, and Soviet resistance was largely orchestrated under the banner of Russian patriotism, in the Great Patriotic War. Hobsbawm sees World War One, not Marxism, as the source of many of the passions of the 'age of extremes'. In China, Vietnam and Cuba, nationalism was a powerful element in the mixture.

The resurrection of the political religion argument in a post-Cold War context—when, as Stedman Jones informs his readers, 'belief in the possibility or even the desirability of a future communist society has become extinct'—may seem a mere intellectual curiosity. Yet far from fading away, the notion of 'political religions', often linked to modern totalitarianisms, has rarely been more popular. Since 2000 there has even been a special journal devoted to it, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, founded by the conservative English historian of Nazism, Michael Burleigh. Included in its first number was a sympathetic interview with Robert Conquest. As

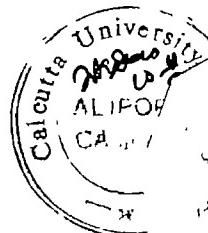
Burleigh noted with satisfaction, 'Theories of totalitarianism have rarely been incompatible with theories of political religions, and such leading exponents of the former as Raymond Aron, Karl-Dietrich Bracher, Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski have employed these terms almost interchangeably'. Since then Emilio Gentile, an Italian historian of fascism, has produced a full-blown volume on the subject, offering an ingenious new variant: 'Soviet Russian Shintoism'. Voegelin, Monnerot (now an ornament of Le Pen's Front National), Talmon and Cohn have all been wheeled on stage once more, and the basic thesis—that the traumas of industrialization and war led to a sacralization of the political during the twentieth century—worked out in a number of new directions. For Stanley Payne, political correctness marks a new outbreak of political religion on us university campuses.

What explains the current renaissance? In some cases, an autobiographical element, the impulse to settle accounts with a radical past, is probably involved. François Furet's *Passing of an Illusion*, demonstrating once again that Nazism and Communism were twins, is the work of an ex-Communist, just as Stedman Jones is a former sixties radical. But the more general background seems to be a concern that Marxism has not been completely purged from intellectual life, and an uneasiness that new dangers, whether in the Middle East or the West itself, may now be lurking. Certainly, once Stedman Jones has written off Marxism from *The German Ideology* on, the way is clear to enunciate a more acceptable *telos* than the overthrow of capitalism. It would be, rather, 'to set the global economic system within a more sustainable and ethically acceptable framework'. A politics, in the Manifesto's words, which requires 'that the proletariat should remain within the bounds of existing society, but should cast away all its hateful ideas concerning the bourgeoisie'.

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### EDUARDO GALEANO: Nothingland—or Venezuela?

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### YOAV PELED: Profits or Glory

The Israeli business class's recipe for a New Middle East—their leadership and high-tech sector, fertilized by Gulf oil money and low-cost Arab labour—was premised on a Palestinian settlement, bitterly opposed by an ethno-nationalist Jewish working class. How did Sharon break the deadlock?

## MICHAEL WITT: Shapeshifter

Formal rigour, social interrogation, poetic intensity: Jean-Luc Godard stands in the premier rank of contemporary artists. In this striking reconceptualization of his work, the movies take their place among sound compositions, tv, texts, videotape and graphic art, as elements of an ongoing multimedia installation.

## BENEDICT ANDERSON: Jupiter Hill

Political education in the dungeons of Barcelona, and the converging tracks of Filipino and Cuban revolutionaries as the 400-year-old Spanish empire enters its final throes. Benedict Anderson concludes his exploration of the late 19th-century world setting of José Rizal's explosive anti-colonial novels.

## BOOK REVIEWS

ANDREW BACEVICH on Tommy Franks, *American Soldier*. Invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq on the account of their senior field commander, as object lesson in a wider strategic failure.

MICHAEL LÖWY on Claude Cahun, *Écrits*. Breton's stylish collaborator on the left wing of the Surrealist movement, and her guerrilla art in the Nazi-occupied Channel Islands.

ALAN MILWARD on Jacques Delors, *Mémoires*. How the birth of a social Europe was thwarted by French Socialists and English Thatcherites alike, as the riptide of marketization headed east.

ACHIN VANAIK on Vivek Chibber, *Locked in Place*. Why did India's post-Independence planning not produce a South Korean economic take-off?

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

## THE YEAR OF SURRENDERING QUIETLY

EVERY FOUR YEARS, liberals unhitch the cart and put it in front of the horse, arguing that the only way to a better tomorrow is to vote for the Democratic nominee. But unless the nominee and Congress are pushed forward by social currents too strong for them to ignore or defy, nothing will alter the default path chosen by the country's supreme commanders and their respective parties. In the American Empire of today, that path is never towards the good. Our task is not to dither in distraction over the lesser of two evil prospects, which will only turn out to be a detour along the same highway.

As now constituted, presidential contests, focused almost exclusively on the candidates of the two major parties, are worse than useless in furnishing any opportunity for national debate. Consider the number of issues on which there is tacit agreement between the Democratic and Republican parties, either as a matter of principle or with an expedient nod-and-wink that, beyond *pro forma* sloganeering, these are not matters suitable to be discussed in any public forum: the role of the Federal Reserve; trade policy; economic redistribution; the role and budget of the CIA and other intelligence agencies (almost all military); nuclear disarmament; reduction of the military budget and the allocation of military procurement; roles and policies of the World Bank, IMF, WTO; crime, punishment and the prison explosion; the war on drugs; corporate welfare; energy policy; forest policy; the destruction of small farmers and ranchers; Israel; the corruption of the political system; the occupation of Iraq. The most significant outcome of the electoral process is usually imposed on prospective voters weeks or months ahead of polling day—

namely, the consensus between the supposed adversaries as to what is off the agenda.

To be sure, there are the two parties who vituperate against each other in great style, but mostly this is only for show, for purposes of assuaging blocs of voters in the home district while honouring the mandate of those paying for the carousel. In the House, on issues like dumping the US Constitution in the trash can of the Patriot Act, there are perhaps thirty representatives from both sides of the aisle prepared to deviate from establishment policy. The low water mark came on September 14, 2002, when a joint resolution of Congress authorizing the president to 'use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001' drew only one No, from Barbara Lee, the Democratic congresswoman from Oakland. A stentorian July 2004 endorsement of Bush's support for Sharon's 'peace plan' by the House of Representatives elicited 407 ayes and 9 lonely noes.<sup>1</sup>

### *Imperial entropy*

On the calendar of standard-issue American politics, the quadrennial nominations and presidential contests have offered, across the past forty

<sup>1</sup> Calls to arms seldom find much resistance among the prudent legislators. Wayne Morse and Ernest Gruening were the only two in the upper chamber to vote against the Tonkin Gulf resolution in 1964. In 2003 we heard an eloquent echo of those two from Robert Byrd, and from one or two others including Ted Kennedy. But entropy is flattening the landscape relentlessly. Byrd, of West Virginia, is 86. Ernie Hollings of South Carolina is heading out to pasture, pursued by the curses of the Israel lobby for having dared to kick up his heels earlier this year, writing in a column for the *Charleston Post Courier* in May that 'Bush felt tax cuts would hold his crowd together, and spreading democracy in the Mideast to secure Israel would take the Jewish vote from the Democrats'. Congress is an infinitely drearier, more conformist place than it was two or three decades ago. Vivid souls like Wright Patman and Henry Gonzalez of Texas, in whose hearts the coals of populist insurgency still glowed, are long gone, along with men like Gruening, Morse and Harold Hughes of Iowa. Hughes, a former truck driver and reformed alcoholic, was a tremendous fellow, who in 1976 explained to a TV interviewer who had asked him if he was a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination: 'When I tell you that if, as president, I was informed that the Soviets had launched a surprise nuclear attack and its missiles were speeding towards our shores, I would order No Response, you will understand that I am not a candidate for the nomination'. Probably the most independent soul in the current House is Ron Paul, the libertarian Republican from Texas.

years, a relentlessly shrinking menu. Back in 1964, the Democratic convention that nominated Lyndon Johnson saw the party platform scorn the legitimate claim of Fannie Lou Hamer and her fellow crusaders in the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to be the lawful Mississippi delegation. The black insurgents went down to defeat in a battle that remained etched in the political consciousness of those who partook in or even observed the fray. There was political division, the bugle blare and sabre slash of genuine struggle. At the Chicago convention of 1968 there was still a run against LBJ, albeit more polite in form, with Eugene McCarthy's challenge. McCarthy's call for schism was an eminently respectable one, from a man who had risen through the US Senate as an orthodox Democratic Cold War liberal.<sup>2</sup>

Four years later, when George McGovern again kindled the anti-war torch, the party's established powers, the labour chieftains and the money men, did their best to douse his modest smoulder, deliberately surrendering the field to Richard Nixon, for whom many of them voted. And yet, by today's standards, that strange man Nixon, under whose aegis the Environmental Protection Agency was founded, the Occupational Safety and Health Act passed, Earth Day first celebrated, diplomatic relations established with Mao's China and Keynesianism accepted as a fact of life, would have been regarded as impossibly radical. Of course, it was the historical pressures of the time that moulded Nixon's actions—the Cold War context, the rising tide of Third World struggles (Vietnam foremost among them), labour victories, inner-city insurgencies, the counter-culture. The same goes for judicial appointments, often the last frantic argument of a liberal urging all back under the Big Democratic Tent. The Blacks, Douglasses, Marshalls and Brennans were conjured to greatness by decade-long movements for political and cultural change, and only later by the good fortune of confirmed nomination. The decay of liberalism is clearly reflected in the quality of judges now installed in the Federal district courts. At the level of the US Supreme Court, history is captious. The best two of the current bunch, Stevens and Souter, were nominated by Republican presidents, Ford and G. H. W. Bush.

<sup>2</sup> McCarthy himself saw the limits of his 'test of the system'. 'It might have been better', he remarked to the reporter Andrew Kopkind in the midst of his campaign, 'to let things run wild—to have a peasants' revolt. Maybe it would have been better to stand back and let people light fires on the hill'. As he well knew, the Democratic Party exists to suppress peasants' revolts and snuff out fires on the hill.

With Jimmy Carter came the omens of neoliberalism, whose hectic growth was a prime feature of the Clinton years under the guiding hand of the Democratic Leadership Council. But in the mid-to-late 1970s Carter had to guard his left flank, whence he sustained eloquent attacks from Barry Commoner and his Citizens' Party in 1976, and then in 1979–80 from Senator Edward Kennedy, who challenged Carter for the nomination under the battle standard of old-line New Deal liberalism. The fiercest political fighting of the 1980s saw Democratic party leaders and pundits ranged shoulder to shoulder against the last coherent left-populist campaign to be mounted within the framework of the Democratic Party: that of Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition. As JoAnn Wypijewski pithily resumes Clinton's payback to the Rainbow forces:

By a brisk accounting of 1993 to 2000, the black stripe of the Rainbow got the Crime Bill, women got 'welfare reform', labour got NAFTA, gays and lesbians got the Defence of Marriage Act. Even with a Democratic Congress in the early years, the peace crowd got no cuts in the military; unions got no help on the right to organize; advocates of DC statehood got nothing (though statehood would virtually guarantee two more Democratic Senate seats and more representation in the House); the single-payer crowd got worse than nothing. Between Clinton's inaugural and the day he left office, 700,000 more persons were incarcerated, mostly minorities; today one in eight black men is barred from voting because of prison, probation or parole.<sup>3</sup>

### *All for Clinton*

By the time Clinton launched his run for the presidency at the start of the 1990s resistance from the left, inside the Democratic Party and beyond, was at a low ebb. It stayed that way throughout his two terms. Battered from his first weeks for any deviation from Wall Street's agenda, Clinton—like Carter before him, who also had a Democratic majority in Congress—had effectively lost any innovative purchase on the system by the end of the first six months, and there was no pressure from the left to hold him even to his timid campaign pledges. By the end of April 1993, Clinton had sold out the Haitian refugees; handed Africa policy to a Bush appointee, Herman Cohen, thus giving Jonas Savimbi the green light to butcher thousands in Angola; put Israel's lobbyists in charge of Middle East policy; bolstered the arms industry with a budget in which

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<sup>3</sup> JoAnn Wypijewski, 'The Rainbow's Gravity', *Nation*, 2 August 2004; republished in Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St Clair, eds, *A Dime's Worth of Difference, Beyond the Lesser of Two Evils*, Counterpunch/AK Press 2004.

projected spending for 1993–94 was higher in constant dollars than average spending in the Cold War from 1950 onwards; increased secret intelligence spending; maintained full Drug Enforcement Agency funding; put Wall Street in charge of national economic strategy; sold out on grazing and mineral rights on public lands; pushed NAFTA forward; plunged into the ‘managed care’ disaster offered as ‘health reform’ by Hillary Rodham Clinton and himself.

Year after year the women’s movement, labour unions, the mainstream environmentalists, civil-liberty watchdogs, liberal advocacy groups and public-interest networks stayed mute, as Clinton triangulated Republican positions and sold poor single mothers, working people, forests, mountains and constitutional protections down the river. A representative figure was Marian Wright Edelman, a friend of the First Lady, head of the Children’s Defence Fund and a Democratic Party loyalist stretching back to the savage wars on Fannie Lou Hamer and the Mississippi Freedom people in 1964. In May 1996, Edelman organized a Save the Children rally at the Lincoln Memorial. She pledged commitment to building a just America. She invoked Lincoln and obliquely criticized George Bush Sr. The name of the current occupant of the White House, who had just endorsed a Republican programme in Wisconsin proposing to end welfare as an entitlement and putting a five-year cap on lifetime benefits, never once passed her lips.

The collapse of the liberal advocates for children was matched by kindred surrender across the entire terrain of public policy, from budget balancing to civil liberties, crime to health care. Pressed for explanations for their pusillanimity, the liberal advocates explained that the Republican hordes who had swept into Congress in 1994 were so barbaric, as was the prospect of a Dole presidency, that they had no choice but to circle the wagons round Clinton.<sup>4</sup> Liberals were aghast when, during his 1996 re-election campaign, Clinton took for his own the Republican proposal for ‘welfare reform’—but they did nothing. There was no insurgency, no

<sup>4</sup> The surrender was signal enough to draw some public sarcasms from the late Daniel Patrick Moynihan who, amid a savage denunciation of Clinton’s proposals to ‘reform’ welfare, declared from the floor of the Senate. There are very few advocacy groups outside. You can stand where I stand and look straight out at the Supreme Court, not one person in between that view. Not one of those flaunted, vaunted advocacy groups forever protecting the interests of the children and the helpless and the homeless and the what-you-will.’ This from the exponent in early Nixon-time of ‘benign neglect’ of black poverty.

rocking of the boat, no 'divisive' challenge on that or anything else. The Democratic Party, from DLC governors to liberal public-interest groups, mustered around their leader and marched arm-in-arm into the late 1990s, along a path signposted toward the greatest orgy of corporate theft in history, deregulation of banking and food safety, rates of logging six times those achieved in the subsequent Bush years, a vast expansion of the death penalty, re-affirmation of racist drug laws, the foundations of the Patriot Act and the criminal bombardment of Yugoslavia.

Clinton presided over passage of NAFTA, insulting labour further with the farce of side agreements on 'rights' that would never be enforced. End result: half the companies targeted by organizing drives in the US intimidate workers by saying that a union vote will force the company to leave town; 30 per cent of them fire the union activists (about 20,000 workers a year); only one in seven organizing drives has a chance of going to a vote, and of those that do result in a 'yes' for the union, less than one in five has any success in getting a contract. Polls suggest that 60 per cent of non-unionized workers would join a union if they had a chance. The Democrats have produced no legislation to help labour organizers; on the contrary, they have campaigned against laws that might have done so.<sup>5</sup>

### *The incumbent*

There is no need to labour the details of Bush's ghastly incumbency in these pages. His performance and personality have been etched well past caricature by dozens of furious assailants, culminating in Michael

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<sup>5</sup> As Adam Lapin pointed out back in 1948 in *The Third Party*, a pamphlet published in support of Henry Wallace and his Progressive Party: 'the hard facts of roll call votes show that Democrats are voting more and more like Republicans. If the Republican Taft-Hartley bill became law over the President's veto, it was because many of the Democrats allied themselves to the Republicans. Only 71 House Democrats voted to sustain the President's veto while 106 voted to override it. In the Senate 20 Democrats voted to override the veto and 22 voted to sustain it.' The law that was to enable capital to destroy organized labour when it became convenient was passed by a bipartisan vote—something you will never learn from the AFL-CIO, or from a thousand hoarse throats at Democratic rallies when the candidate is whoring for the labour vote. As Lapin put it: 'The Democratic administration carries the ball for Wall Street's foreign policy. And the Republican party carries the ball for Wall Street's domestic policy . . . Of course the roles are sometimes interchangeable. It was President Truman who broke the 1946 railroad strike, asked for legislation to conscript strikers and initiated the heavy fines against the miners' union.'

Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11*, the Democrats' prime campaign offering.<sup>6</sup> He came by his fortune and his presidency dishonestly. Official rebirth in Christ led him not to compassion but to vindictiveness. Genes and education turned into a Mendelian stew of all that is worst and most vulgar in the anthropology of the Northeastern and Texan elites.<sup>7</sup> But despite his unalluring personality and severe limitations Bush does not merit the weight of those hysterical comminations heaped on his head on a daily basis. Reagan was much worse. So, in some significant ways, was Clinton. Bush stands accused of killing some 3,500–4,000 Afghan civilians, and 12,000–14,000 Iraqis. On conservative estimates, Clinton supervised the slaughter, by direct military assault or by sanctions, of nearly ten times that number; many more if you throw in those who died in the Rwandan genocide, in part because Clinton wanted to keep the international spotlight on Yugoslavia.<sup>8</sup>

The other cherished liberal myth, that a vast gulf separates Bush's foreign policy from what Al Gore's would have been, is belied by the latter's own words—replicating his 1992 onslaughts on George Bush Sr for not having finished off Saddam Hussein. Gore proclaimed in the US Senate that Saddam was

a threat to regional and even global security . . . The threat he represents is so severe that responding with force is not only legitimate but could be

<sup>6</sup> As such, Moore's film studiously avoided any mention of Israel or the footage of multi-million-strong anti-war marches—let alone Clinton's record on Iraq.

<sup>7</sup> For the structural deficiencies in his psychological make-up I would be inclined to blame his mother Barbara, one of those unpleasant people who visibly rejoice in displays of their own bile, in marked contrast to George Sr's delightful mother, Dorothy. Justin Frank's recent *Bush on the Couch: Inside the Mind of the President* (New York 2004), a Kleinian excavation of Bush's psyche, provides a chilling account. While George Sr gallivanted round the Southwest and Mexico she was marooned in a dingy apartment in Odessa, Texas, on the edge of the Permian basin, far from polite Connecticut. She regularly thrashed her children, refused to cook for them and, when her daughter Robin died of cancer, did not tell George Jr but went off for a round of golf. She would not attend her own awful mother's funeral, suggesting that Bush's own refusal to attend those of soldiers killed in Iraq may have deeper roots than the politic eschewing of any visual link with war's downside.

<sup>8</sup> Bush figures: for Afghanistan, see Marc Herold's 'Dossier on Civilian Victims of United States' Aerial Bombardment of Afghanistan', accessible via the University of New Hampshire website; for Iraq, see the Iraq Body Count website, based on news reports. Clinton figures: Richard Garfield, 'The Public Health Impact of Sanctions', *Middle East Report* 215, Summer 2000, p. 17 'a conservative estimate of "excess deaths" among under five-year-olds [in Iraq] since 1991 would be 300,000'.

unavoidable... Saddam Hussein has more troops than Hitler did in the early years of World War II.

During the 1992 campaign, Gore wrote in the *New York Times* that 'we can no more hope for a constructive relationship with Saddam Hussein than we could hope to housebreak a cobra', that Saddam Hussein 'is not an acceptable part of the landscape' and that 'his Ba'athist regime must be dismantled as well'. As he put it on *Larry King Live*: 'We should have bent every policy—and we should do it now—to overthrow that regime and to make sure that Saddam Hussein is removed from power'.

### *Ghost senator*

The Kerry candidacy in 2004? As an inspirational candidate, he's a dud, even damper a political squib than Michael Dukakis and, by dint of his chill snobbery, less appealing. Democrats know this in their hearts. Twit them about Kerry's dreariness, reminiscent of tepid chowder on a damp day in Boston or of Weeping Ed Muskie amid the snows of New Hampshire, and one gets the upraised palm and petulant cry, 'I don't want to hear a word against Kerry!' It is as though the Democratic candidate has been entombed, pending resurrection as president, with an honour guard of the National Organization of Women, the AFL-CIO, the League of Conservation Voters, Taxpayers for Justice and the NAACP. To open the tomb prematurely, to admit the oxygen of life and criticism, is to blaspheme against political propriety. Amid the defilements of the political system, and the collapse of all serious political debate among the liberals and most of the left, the Democratic candidate becomes a kind of Hegelian Anybody, as in Anybody but...<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Many ABB-ers have spent 2004 identifying Bush as off the usual spectrum in his obeisance to the corporate and neoliberal agenda, with this year's election therefore representing the last opportunity for resistance to fascism. Thus the Bush-As-Monster frenzy, which has every bookstore piled with hysterical tracts making the president out as a cross between Caligula and Nero, without even the latter's fiddle playing as a redeeming quality. Ironically, 'Anybody but Bush' has engendered a forced perspective which leaves Bush as the dominant, indeed lone substantive feature of the political landscape. In the huge demonstration on the eve of the Republican convention, there were 'maybe 450,000 people on the streets of Manhattan, all of them hating Bush and I saw ten people with Kerry/Edwards signs. Maybe two with Nader/Camejo signs. People don't connect hating Bush with voting for Kerry': JoAnn Wypijewski.

Kerry's inner emptiness is thus peculiarly appropriate. Insecurely positioned from childhood on the margins of the elite, a heavily calculating opportunism has been his life's guiding compass, whether pursuing wealthy women or plotting his political career. His four months in Vietnam—during which he bagged five medals (see overleaf), enough to get him transferred to a desk job as an admiral's aide in New York, and to earn the soubriquet Quick John from the crew members he left behind—were followed, after a year and a half's cautious consideration, by five months of high-profile media coverage as a leading spokesman for Vietnam Veterans Against the War, the springboard for his first (unsuccessful) Congressional bid. His tour in Vietnam became the target of damaging campaign ads in late August 2004 that clearly rattled Kerry, who fumed at these onslaughts on his martial honour from a president so indifferent to the Call to Arms that he declined even to undergo a routine medical check to maintain his status in the National Guard. But Kerry has only himself to blame, since it was his decision to exploit what he once, with no less opportunism, repudiated, preening at Boston with the medals he so carefully declined to toss away during the anti-war rallies in which he insisted on a starring role back in the early 1970s.

Kerry's three terms since entering the US Senate in 1984 have left almost no footprints of interest. Karl Rove's propagandists have been hard put to transform this utterly conventional figure into a seditious radical, hell-bent on putting the Pentagon out of business.<sup>10</sup> A seasoned staffer on one of the military appropriations committees described him deprecatingly to me as 'the ghost senator; around here he doesn't count for anything.' Instead, Kerry's time was more profitably spent, raising funds at a rate that put him in the top decile of incumbents. By 1990 he was already able to spend \$8 million on his re-election, climbing to \$10 million by 2002, though he had raised even more than this—\$15 million compared to an average of less than \$5 million for senatorial incumbents running for re-election during that year. The vast bulk of his money came from finance, insurance, real estate and lawyers and lobbyists.

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<sup>10</sup> In the early days of his Senate career Kerry made headlines with hearings on contra-CIA drug smuggling and on BCCI, the crooked Pakistani bank linked to the CIA. Some of the Senate elders must have told him to mind his manners. The watchdog's barks died abruptly.

## Kerry's Vietnam—Four Months, Five Medals

The liberal press has been loath to probe—or even report—the substance of fellow Swift veterans' doubts about how Kerry got his medals. Arriving in Vietnam on November 17, 1968, Kerry took part in Operation Sea Lords, the post-Tet Offensive programme aimed at terrorizing the Mekong Delta peasants into turning against the National Liberation Front. The entire area, except for certain designated 'friendly villages', was a free-fire zone—meaning the Americans could shoot at will and count anyone they killed as Viet Cong. Night after night, the Swift boats plied the waters, harassing and often killing villagers, fishermen and farmers. On daylight missions the boats were accompanied by Cobra Attack helicopters that strafed the riverbanks and the skeletal forest, ravaged by napalm and Agent Orange.

Kerry was notoriously zealous in this task. As his machine-gunner James Wasser admiringly described: 'Kerry was an extremely aggressive officer and so was I. I liked that he took the fight to the enemy, that he was tough and gutsy—not afraid to spill blood for his country.' A telling incident occurred on a Christmas Eve patrol near the Cambodian border. Kerry ordered Wasser to open up a barrage of machine-gun fire near a small fishing village. In Brinkley's *Tour of Duty*, Wasser describes how he had killed an old farmer leading a water buffalo. 'I'm haunted by that old man's face. He was just doing his daily farming, hurting nobody. It may have been Christmas Eve, but I was real sombre after that.' It turned out that Kerry's boat had shot up one of the few 'friendly' villages, with a garrison of South Vietnamese ARV soldiers. It is very striking that we never find, in any of Kerry's diaries or letters of the time, the slightest expression of contrition or remorse. Contrast Wasser's sad reflections with Kerry's self-righteous diary account of such salvos: 'I have no doubt that on occasion some innocents were hit by bullets that were aimed in self-defence at the enemy, but of all the cases in Vietnam that could be labelled massacres, this was certainly the most spurious.'

On the night of December 2, 1968, Kerry went on his first patrol. He and his crew opened fire on some Vietnamese, fleeing from a sampan pulled up on the bank. According to Kerry's report, 'the air was full of explosions . . . a stinging piece of heat socked into my arm and seemed to burn like hell'. According to fellow crew member William Schachte and commanding officer Grant Hibbard, Kerry had fired an M-79 grenade launcher too close to the shore. The grenade exploded against a rock and a tiny fragment of metal, barely 2 mm wide and less than 1 cm long, had ricocheted onto his forearm. The medic who treated him was surprised Kerry had managed to keep the splinter embedded in his arm on the journey to the field hospital. It was removed with a pair of tweezers and the scratch covered with a bandaid. Back at base, Kerry informed his sceptical commanding officer that the wound merited a Purple Heart, and persisted until Lt Cdr Hibbard finally said OK.

On February 20, 1969, Kerry incurred the wound that won his second Purple Heart. His own operating report recounts 'intense rocket and rifle fire . . . a piece of hot shrapnel bore into [Kerry's] left leg . . . blood running down the deck'. Those with him recall no enemy fire or 'blood on the deck', and there is no report of any boat in the convoy sustaining damage; they suggest another ricochet from his own misfired M-79 was probably responsible. Kerry's leg was briefly treated on an offshore ship, and he 'returned to duty hours later'.

Kerry's Silver Star, lofting him to the useful status of 'war hero', was awarded for an incident on February 28, 1969, when his boat came under small-arms fire on the Dong Cung River. Against standing orders, Kerry beached the boat and opened up at the source of the shots with .50 and .60 calibre machine guns. His motive in going ashore, as a crew member

explained to Brinkley, was to verify the kills. 'We never knew whether we killed any VC or not'. The crew took evidence (undescribed) from the body of a Vietnamese boy killed by the machine-gun bullets and then carried on downstream, where they were fired on once more by a young Vietnamese with a B-40 rocket grenade launcher. As Kerry recounted the story to Jonathan Carroll of the *New Yorker* in 1996. 'It was either going to be him or it was going to be us. It was that simple. I don't know why it wasn't us . . . He was standing in front of us, aiming a rocket right at us, and, for whatever reason, he didn't pull the trigger—he turned and ran' Kerry's machine-gunner Tommy Belodeau found no mystery in the Vietnamese soldier's failure to fire: he had not reloaded the RPG after the first shot at Kerry's boat, and was effectively unarmed. As Belodeau explained to the *Boston Globe*'s David Warsh, he himself had opened fire with his M-60 machine gun on the Vietnamese at a range of ten feet, shooting him in the legs. The wounded man crawled behind a nearby hooch. At this point, Belodeau said, Kerry had seized an M-16 rifle, jumped out of the boat, gone up to the dying man and finished him off. Or, in the words of Kerry's Silver Star citation (issued by Admiral Zumwalt, based on an incident report written by Kerry himself):

With utter disregard for his own safety and the enemy rockets, he again ordered a charge on the enemy, beached his boat only ten feet from the VC rocket position, and personally led a landing party ashore in pursuit of the enemy . . . The extraordinary daring and personal courage of Lt. Kerry in attacking the numerically superior force in the face of intense fire were responsible for the highly successful mission.

Two weeks later, on March 13, 1969, Kerry got his Bronze Star and his third Purple Heart in the 'rescued from the water' incident that is now a \$50 million TV ad. In Kerry's account, a mine goes off alongside his boat, blowing Special Forces lieutenant Jim Rassman into the water and badly wounding Kerry. With his arm bleeding heavily and enemy fire raging all around, Kerry heroically hoists Rassman to safety. The others present claim there was no enemy fire, that Kerry had at first fled when the mine blew up, and only returned to help Rassman when he saw the coast was clear. Medical reports certify that Kerry suffered only minor bruising to his arm, caused when the detonation threw him against a bulkhead—plus minor shrapnel wounds on his buttocks, apparently from an incident earlier that day. Kerry's boat had been ferrying Green Berets, US Navy SEALS and Nung assassins who, not for the first time, had mistakenly targeted a friendly village. The Green Berets and SEALS opened fire on South Vietnamese troops interrogating a group of women and children. At least ten of the villagers were killed. Meanwhile, against orders, Kerry had left his boat, attached himself to the Nung and was, in his own words, 'shooting and blowing things up'. One of the Nung (or, on some accounts, Kerry himself) threw a grenade into a hut filled with sacks of rice. Grains of rice and some tiny metal fragments got embedded in Kerry's backside—Purple Heart Number Three, meaning he could file a request for transfer out of Vietnam.

The Nixon tapes record a piquant moment in April 1971, after Nixon had been watching Kerry's performance as a Vets Against the War spokesman on TV. 'He is a sort of phony, isn't he?' the president remarked; adding later, 'only good from a PR standpoint'.

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See the longer excavation of Kerry's conduct in Vietnam by Jeffrey St. Clair and myself, 'What Kerry Really Did in Vietnam', CounterPunch, 29 July 2004. Douglas Brinkley's highly admiring *Tour of Duty: John Kerry and the Vietnam War*, New York 2004, based almost entirely on Kerry's diaries and letters, offers many telling vignettes. See also Michael Kranish, Brian Mooney and Nina Easton, *John F. Kerry: The Complete Biography* by the Boston Globe Reporters Who Know Him Best, New York 2004, and John O'Neill and Jerome Corsi, *Unfit for Command*, Washington, DC 2004.

Although once his nomination was assured he regularly hammed it up in photo-ops with the barons of big labour, as a senator Kerry voted for NAFTA, the WTO and virtually every other job-slashing trade pact that came before the Senate. He courted and won the endorsement of nearly every police association in the nation, regularly calling for another 100,000 cops on the streets and even tougher criminal sanctions against victimless crimes. He refused to reconsider his fervid support for the war on drug users, and minimum mandatory sentences. Like Lieberman in 2000, Kerry has marketed himself as a cultural prude, regularly chiding teens about the clothes they wear, the music they listen to and the movies they watch. But even Lieberman did not go so far as to support the Communications Decency Act. Kerry did. (Fortunately, even this Supreme Court had the sense to strike the law down, ruling that it trampled across the First Amendment.) All of this is standard fare for contemporary Democrats, but Kerry always went the extra mile. The senator duly voted for Clinton's 1996 bill to dismantle welfare for poor mothers and their children.

### *Punishing countries*

Kerry enthusiastically backed both of Bush's wars. In June 2004, at the very moment Bush showed signs of wavering, the senator called for 25,000 new troops to be sent to Iraq, with a plan for the US military to remain entrenched there for at least the next four years. Kerry supported the Patriot Act without reservation or even much contemplation. Lest one conclude that this was a momentary aberration sparked by the post-9/11 hysteria, consider the fact that Kerry also voted for the Act's two Clinton-era predecessors, the 1994 Crime Bill and the 1996 Counter-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act.<sup>11</sup> In mid August a senior aide of Kerry said that his boss supported '96 per cent' of the Patriot Act and indeed had drafted some of its language. In his 1997 book *The New War* Kerry wrote, five years before Guantánamo: 'We now need to consider experimenting with our closest partners in a system that sets up special courts to try cases at home involving victims abroad'. He went on:

In dealing with states that are outright criminal, the United States may, at times, need to take unilateral action to protect its citizens, its interests, its

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<sup>11</sup> Kerry professes personal opposition to the death penalty, albeit with exclusions for terrorists and cop killers. Such concertina exclusions usually expand as circumstances warrant, to take in child-killers and other unpopular categories.

integrity. This need not take as dramatic a form as our invasion of Panama and arrest of Noriega, though it would be unwise to rule out that option *a priori*. It does mean that we can and should punish countries that wilfully refuse to protect our citizens and in effect become state sponsors of criminality, as we now are doing with Myanmar and Nigeria.<sup>12</sup>

Beyond his dedication to ‘seeing it through’ in Iraq, Kerry’s global policies are virtually indistinguishable from those of Bush—although his prostrations toward Israel have been slavish even by normal Democratic standards; expressing his understanding for Israel’s assassination of Hamas leader Rantissi, for instance. His chief foreign-policy adviser, Rand Beers, worked first for Clinton, then Bush as a ‘counter-terrorism’ official. Beers was one of the architects of Plan Colombia, ardently defending the coca-eradication programme that saw peasants and their farms doused with glyphosate. Kerry has lashed Bush for being soft on Chávez, and has accused the Venezuelan leader of aiding drug traffickers and being too close to Castro. According to Beers: ‘The Bush administration has a somewhat tainted record on Venezuela. They’ve been unprepared to do everything necessary to speak out on the issues of democracy.’

Internationally, Kerry offers himself largely as a more competent manager of the Bush agenda, a steadier hand on the helm of Empire. Domestically, the best that can be hoped for from him is a return to the disgraceful *status quo ante* on income tax, plus modest funding increases for Medicare/Medicaid and higher-end insurance claims—though these are unlikely to get through a Congress filled to the brim with loyal representatives of commercial health interests, and will anyway be subordinate to Kerry’s first task, lowering the deficit. Whoever settles down in the Oval Office next January will be facing a very serious economic situation, with the level of the national debt as a proportion of GDP at an all time high, and the distinct prospect of a break in the bubble in housing prices which would most likely shove the country back deep into the recession from which it has barely emerged.

Kerry’s pedigree has all the appropriate quarterings. He was a founder member of the Democratic Leadership Council, the camarilla of neo-liberalists that reshaped the image of the Democratic Party as a hawkish and pro-business party with a soft spot for abortion—essentially a stingier

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<sup>12</sup> John Kerry, *The New War. the Web of Crime that Threatens America’s Security*, New York 1997, p. 182.

version of the Rockefeller Republicans. DLC strategy has been to concentrate on the white-collar professionals and the corporations, particularly in the area of the 'new economy', whose CEOs Clinton so successfully courted—layers capable of generating campaign contributions far outweighing those of organized labour. The Democratic Party, the argument went, would always be able to count on the working-class vote—it had nowhere else to go. Targeting the New Economy billionaires has had its own, unstoppable logic. As David Friedman of the New America Foundation put it in the *Los Angeles Times*: 'the cleansing of working-class concerns from America's once-progressive politics' reflects the interests of 'a new, fabulously privileged elite—including website and computer gurus, actors, media magnates and financial power brokers', who now exercise 'unparalleled influence' over mainstream liberalism and the Party itself.<sup>13</sup> In the categories of this year's Democratic convention sponsors—Platinum Plus (over \$2 million), Platinum (over \$1 million), Gold (over \$500,000), Silver (over \$250,000)—even the largest organized-labour contributions are ranked way down in Bronze.

### *The great liberal silence*

The obsessive 'Anyone but Bush' posture across the liberal-progressive spectrum has ensured that Kerry has not had his feet held to the fire by any faction of the Democratic Party. This has been the year of surrendering quietly. Dean's candidacy expired in Iowa, its prime consequence having been to lure a large chunk of the anti-war movement into the Democratic fold—which, as Dean imploded, then agreed that ABB was

<sup>13</sup> Cited in Kevin Phillips, *Wealth and Democracy*, New York 2002, p. 342. The top contributing sectors, professions and industries to Kerry in 2004 thus far law firms, the retired; education, securities and investment, health care, real estate, Hollywood, printing and publishing, civil servants and public officials. Top individual contributors: donors allied with the University of California, Harvard, Goldman Sachs, Skadden Arps, Time Warner, Citigroup, UBS Americas, Robbins Kaplan et al, Piper Rudnick LLP, Microsoft, Morgan Stanley, Viacom, Bank of America, JP Morgan, Stanford, University of Michigan, IBM. Top fundraisers: Alan Solomont of Massachusetts-based Solomont Bailis Ventures, Orin Kramer from NY-based Kramer Spellman, Ben Barnes (the lobbyist who got Bush his safe slot in the National Guard) from Entrecorp in Texas, Richard Ziman from Arden Realty in California, Mark Weiner of Financial Innovations, Rhode Island, Bob Clifford of Clifford law offices in Illinois, Hassan Nemaze of Nemaze Capital NY, James Johnson of Perseus Corp in Washington DC. In addition there are huge donors such as Soros, ladling out the juice via 527 operations.

the bleach of choice and committed to the support of a pro-war candidate. Looking for evidence of active protests against Kerry on the liberal-left in America in the late summer of 2004 was like trudging through the grey ash around Mount St. Helens, after the eruption. In thirty years I can recall nothing like it.

One cannot fault Kerry on truth in packaging. In the months after his nomination became assured, he methodically disappointed one vital section of his liberal constituency after another. In April, organized labour was admonished that Kerry's prime task would be to battle the deficit. In May and again in July, women were informed that the candidate shared with the anti-abortion lobby its view of the relationship between conception and the start of life, and would be prepared to nominate anti-choice judges. In June it was the anti-war legions, to whom Kerry pledged four more years of occupation in Iraq.

Touting his brief stint as a Massachusetts prosecutor, Kerry vowed to put more cops on the streets and promised there would be no intermission in the war on drugs. The grand total of those caught in the toils of the criminal-justice system is now nearly 6.9 million, either in jail, on probation or on parole, amounting to 3.2 per cent of the adult population in the United States. In many cities a young black man faces a far better chance of getting locked up than of getting a job, since jail is the definitive bipartisan response of both Democrats and Republicans to the theories of John Maynard Keynes. Blacks have got less than nothing from Kerry, aside from his wife's declaration that she too is an African American, yet the Congressional Black Caucus cheers the man who voted for welfare reform and devotes its time to flaying Ralph Nader.<sup>14</sup>

War in Iraq? A majority of the country wants out, certainly most Democrats. Kerry wants in, even more than Bush. When the Democratic National Committee told Dennis Kucinich what to do with his peace plank, the Representative from Ohio tugged his forelock and told his followers to shuffle back in under the Big Tent and help elect a man who pledges to fight the war better and longer than Bush. Feminist leaders kept their mouths shut when Kerry flew his kite about nominating anti-choice judges. Gay leaders did not utter so much as a squeak when

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<sup>14</sup> The very well-heeled Teresa, widow of Republican Senator John Heinz and heiress to the ketchup and Starkist fortune, was born in Mozambique in 1938, of European/Portuguese extraction.

Kerry declared his opposition to same-sex marriages. Did we hear a peep from Norman Lear and People for the American Way as Kerry, the man who voted for the Patriot Act, revived his Tipper Gore-ish posturing about the evils of popular culture and said he would draft laws to elide the constitutional separation of church from state, permitting 'faith-based organizations' to get some purchase on Federal funds?

In spring 2004 Kerry told James Hoffa of the Teamsters that, though he would not touch the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, he would 'drill everywhere else like never before'. There was not a bleat from the major environmental groups. He pledged the same policy again to the American Gas Association a couple of months later, throwing in the prospect of a new trans-Alaska-Canada pipeline for natural gas from the Arctic. Once again the big environmental organizations held their tongues. True, Andy Stern, head of the Service Employees, tossed a firecracker onto the Convention floor by confiding to the *Washington Post's* David Broder that another four years of Bush might be less damaging than the stifling of needed reform within the party and the labour movement that would occur if Kerry becomes president. After a short period of re-education, however, Stern recanted and said he was 'a hundred per cent' for Kerry.<sup>15</sup> Thus ended labour's great revolt against a candidate who has cast his full share of votes in Congress to ensure job flight from America, and whose commitment to the living standards of working people is aptly resumed in his pledge to raise the minimum wage to \$7 an hour by 2007, far below where it stood in real terms nearly forty years ago.<sup>16</sup>

### *Joblessness and war*

From June 2004, a bet on Kerry as the winner in November rested on two conspicuous features of the political landscape: the war and the economy. Bush had landed the US in a costly mess in Iraq, press-ganging reservists into open-ended tours of duty, a widely resented tactic. The economic

<sup>15</sup> The SIEU spent the weeks after the convention in states such as Oregon working to keep Nader, a man who has done more for working people than John Kerry ever has or will, off the ballot.

<sup>16</sup> Contrast the liberal-progressive refusal to raise any sort of trouble with the robust comment of the conservative organizer Paul Weyrich: 'For all of their brilliance, [Ken] Mehlman and Karl Rove . . . made a very serious mistake with this [Republican] Convention's line-up. It is one that the rank and file should not tolerate. If the President is embarrassed to be seen with conservatives at the convention, maybe conservatives will be embarrassed to be seen with the President on Election Day.'

recovery, such as it is, has had the worst record in producing new jobs of any since 1947. What was the Democratic candidate's response?

Kerry worked methodically to eradicate any hope that he might extricate the us from Bush's war in Iraq. Back on the campaign trail after the flag-wagging in Boston, he administered yet another wallop to wan progressives trying to persuade themselves that he was more of a man of peace than Bush: he surrendered Saddam's non-existent WMDs as an election issue. Jamie Rubin, top State Department spokesman in the Clinton years and now Kerry's foreign-policy flack, was the bearer of this huge gift to Bush. Rubin told the *Washington Post* that 'knowing then what he knows today' about the lack of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons in Iraq, Kerry still would have voted to authorize the war and, 'in all probability', would have launched a military attack to oust Hussein by now if he were president. (Previously, Kerry had only said, with typical forthrightness, that he 'might' have still gone to war.) Kerry himself then did some further clarifying in Arizona, where he told the press that, knowing then what he knows now, he would not have changed his vote to authorize the war, although he would have handled things 'very differently' from Bush.

In late August, with us forces engaged in heavy fighting in Najaf, and American casualties edging inexorably towards 1,000, Rubin apologized to the *Washington Post* for his 'in all probability' phrase. In more philosophical mode, he now explained that it was 'unknowable whether Kerry would have waged the war. "Bush went to war the wrong way," Rubin said. "What we don't know is what would have happened if a president had gone about it the right way".'<sup>17</sup> Equally unknowable is what Kerry's

<sup>17</sup> *Washington Post*, 25 August 2004. Kerry's endorsements of Bush's war on Iraq coincided with statements from two senior Republicans saying the war was a disaster and the us should get out. Rep. Doug Bereuter, vice chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, wrote to his constituents in Nebraska's first district. 'Knowing now what I know about the reliance on the tenuous or insufficiently corroborated intelligence used to conclude that Saddam maintained a substantial WMD arsenal, I believe that launching the pre-emptive military action was not justified'. At the Iowa State Fair in mid-August, Rep. Jim Leach called for us troops to be withdrawn from Iraq by the end of the year. Leach was one of the handful of Republicans who voted against a resolution authorizing President George W. Bush to use force in Iraq. Such criticism on the Democratic side was virtually inaudible, with Russell Feingold of Wisconsin, the only us senator to vote against the Patriot Act, one of the very few to publicly criticize Kerry's stance on the war.

'very different' might mean. Under Bush, the UN has given its full backing to the ongoing Occupation and its puppet government in Baghdad; fifty Islamic states have signed up in support; NATO forces are hard at work inside Iraq's borders.<sup>18</sup>

On the economy, Kerry's message at the Boston convention was dourly clear. Sitting next to Teresa Heinz Kerry during the candidate's acceptance speech was Robert Rubin, ex-Secretary of the Treasury and Wall Street's point man during the Clinton years, whose former subordinates are now running Kerry's economic policy. Here we may as well state the obvious. As a political force on the national stage organized labour, manifested in the big unions of the AFL-CIO, is pretty much dead. As a fraction of the workforce, non-government union membership is now down to 9 per cent, and that number is sinking by a digit a year. In 1992, labour could still claim to have made at least a rhetorical input into Clinton's campaign, with its pledges about 'putting people first'. Clinton repaid labour's 'get out the vote' efforts and money by selling out on health reform and failing to do anything on labour law; unless this changes, prospects for union organizing are bleak.

In 2004, organized labour has failed to elicit a single significant pledge from Kerry. His only concern is Wall Street and the bankers. His April statement that the deficit would be his first consideration meant goodbye to any decent jobs programme. Big labour's prime political functions are, domestically, to rally its members and cash for the Democratic candidate and, internationally, to use the millions put its way by the National Endowment for Democracy and cognate operations to subvert radical organizing (as, most lately, in the efforts to oust Hugo Chávez). That is the story—just another mile-marker in the decline of labour since the late 1960s. Kerry will do nothing to arrest that decline, though his public-spending cuts, if his deficit-slashing is serious, may help to hasten it along.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> One of the more patronizing arguments of the Kerry-tilting exponents of ABB is that the Iraqi people crave a rebuff to Bush, and that it would be wrong to subvert this hope. As if those capable of identifying the UN's Vieira de Mello as a logical target are incapable of realism about the continuities of Empire, or of recalling that a Democratic president supervised eight years of lethal sanctions.

<sup>19</sup> Wall Street's waning support for Bush in late August 2004 was above all based on a desire to see the Federal deficit fall: *Financial Times*, 25 August 2004.

Progressives who have touted the 'Anyone but Bush' standard (which reached its comical nadir with furious defences of Kerry's record as an accredited war hero and winner of medals in Vietnam, accompanied by denunciations of Bush as a draft dodger) claim that the minute Kerry is sworn in as president they will be out on the streets, attacking from the left. One only has to look at the surrenders of the Clinton years, sketched in above, to predict with some confidence that these pledges of resistance are vacuous.

### *Safeguarding the duopoly*

Always partial to monopolies, the Democrats think they should hold the exclusive concession on any electoral challenge to Bush and the Republicans. The Nader campaign prompts them to hysterical tirades. Republicans are more relaxed. Ross Perot and his Reform Party actually cost George Bush Sr his re-election in 1992, yet Perot never drew a tenth of the abuse for his presumption that Nader does now.<sup>20</sup> Of course the Democrats richly deserve the challenge. Through the Clinton years the party remained 'united' in fealty to corporate corruption and right-wing class viciousness; and so inevitably and appropriately, the Nader-centred independent challenge was born, modestly in 1996, strongly in 2000 and now again in 2004. The rationale for Nader's challenge was as sound as it was for Henry Wallace half a century earlier.

The central political issue in America today is the decay of the political system itself, and of the two prime parties that share the spoils. Wherever one looks, at the gerrymandered districts, the balloting methods, the fundraising, corruption steams like vapours from a vast swamp. In the House of Representatives, only some 35 seats are in serious contention. The rest have been gerrymandered into permanent incumbencies. A key attribute for entry into America's professional political caste is the ability, so well demonstrated by the Senator for Massachusetts, to cultivate the interests of a multi-millionaire donor base. Of course money has

<sup>20</sup> As Michael Eisencher has pointed out, it was not Nader but Bush who took the important votes from Gore in 2000: '20 per cent of all Democratic voters, 12 per cent of all self-identified liberal voters, 39 per cent of all women voters, 44 per cent of all seniors, one-third of all voters earning under \$20,000 per year, 42 per cent of those earning \$20–30,000 annually and 31 per cent of all voting union members cast their ballots for Bush'. See 'The Greening of California', *Z Magazine*, December 2000.

always played a decisive role in American politics, but these days the amounts required are truly vast. It was Rep. Tony Coelho of California who oriented the Democratic Party in the 1980s towards the mountains of cash available (given suitable pledges) from corporate treasuries, thus setting the compass for the Lincoln bedroom auctions of Clinton-time and Al Gore's black-bag outing to the Buddhist temple.

There are plenty of campaigns here in the USA that pit idealism and the zeal for justice against the cruelties and oppressions of the system. They do not rise and fall in tune with the political cycle and have faced bipartisan obloquy from Democrats and Republicans. The struggle for Palestinian justice has grown from near invisibility in the early 1970s to a substantial movement active across the entire United States, notably in church and community groups and on campuses. Ralph Nader's fierce denunciations of AIPAC, of the Anti-Defamation League and of the overall malign power of the Israeli lobby would have been inconceivable even a decade ago. The fact that Nader, a Palestinian, felt emboldened to break a lifetime's public silence on the topic is testimony to the change wrought by thirty years of organizing.

If ever there was a long-haul crowd, it is the anti-death penalty organizers who saw their greatest recent victory come in Illinois when Governor Ryan conceded police torture and racism and took a dozen inmates off death row. Year after year, the anti-death penalty campaigns across the country offer vivid dioramas of the savageries of the state at every stage, from the biographies of those condemned to the death-house conveyor belts that run continuously in states such as Texas and Florida. Medical marijuana has been one important gateway in the long guerrilla campaign against the 'war on drugs', in essence a war on the poor, particularly minorities. The right of people in permanent pain to have their palliative of choice is one that has endless resonances, in combating the predations of the pharmaceutical industry and the inequities of the law and its enforcement. The living-wage campaign, fought in city after city across the country, has kept a focus on building a movement that actually fights for the working class. Amid the decline of organized labour, these campaigns have created coalitions at the city level, below the radar of the vested powers operating through state and Federal legislatures.

Many attest to a slack political tempo this campaign season. A simple refusal to vote at all on the presidential candidate could see the turnout

drop below 50 per cent, as bleak a register of popular cynicism about the realities of the democratic mandate in the us today as the Venezuelan turnout was exhilarating. The next us president could even be denied a majority 'mandate' from the sliver of those voters going to the polls. By the same token, the shape of resistance in the coming years will not derive from a vote for Kerry, or even one for Nader, but from the harnessing of those vital, idealistic energies that always move through the American firmament, awaiting release.

EDUARDO GALEANO

## Nothingland—or Venezuela?

A STRANGE DICTATOR, this Hugo Chávez. A masochist, with suicidal tendencies: he established a constitution that allows the people to get rid of him, and then took the risk of this happening in a recall referendum, which Venezuela is the first country in history to have held. He was not punished: 5,800,629 Venezuelans voted for him to remain president, with 3,989,008 against—a margin of 19 per cent. This was the eighth election Chávez has won in five years, with a transparency of which Bush could only have dreamed.

Faithful to his own constitution, Chávez accepted the referendum called by the opposition, and put his presidency at the disposal of the people: 'You decide'. Until now, presidencies have been interrupted only by death, putsches, popular uprisings or parliamentary proceedings. The Venezuelan referendum has ushered in an unprecedented form of direct democracy. An extraordinary event: how many leaders would be brave enough to do such a thing? And how many would remain in power afterwards?

This tyrant invented by the mass media, this fearsome demon, has just given a tremendous vitamin-injection to democracy, which, both in Latin America and elsewhere, has become rickety and enfeebled. A month prior to the referendum, the 81-year-old former president Carlos Andrés Pérez, that flawless democrat whom the media so adore (despite his impeachment on corruption charges), openly called for a coup d'état. In an interview from his Miami base—in which he also argued that Chávez should 'die like a dog'—he stated in the plainest terms that 'the path of violence' was the only possible one for Venezuela, and discounted the referendum because 'it is not part of Latin America's specific character'. Our specific character or, in other words, our precious heritage: a deaf and dumb populace.

Until only a few years ago, Venezuelans went to the beach when there were elections. Voting was not, and still is not, compulsory. But the country has gone from total apathy to total enthusiasm. The

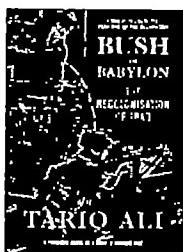
torrent of voters, standing in the sun for hours in enormous queues, overwhelmed the structures that had been put in place by the electoral authorities. The turnout was 70 per cent, up from an average of 55 per cent in previous elections. The democratic flood also made it difficult to use, as had been planned, the latest technology for preventing ballot fraud, in this country where the dead have the bad habit of turning out to vote, and where some of the living vote several times.

'There is no freedom of speech here!' protest the TV screens, radio waves and newspaper front-pages, with absolute freedom of expression. Chávez has not closed a single one of the mouths that daily spew forth insults and lies. A chemical war, aimed at poisoning public opinion, is being waged with impunity. The only TV channel that has been closed down in Venezuela, Channel 8, was a victim not of Chávez but of those who usurped his presidency for a couple of days in the fleeting coup of April 2002—the coalition of business, media and church interests that had, fittingly, tried to install employers' association chairman Pedro Carmona as head of state. And when Chávez returned from prison on 14 April and once more assumed the presidency on the shoulders of an immense multitude, the principal Venezuelan media blotted out the event. Private TV stations spent the whole day showing Tom and Jerry cartoons.

Such exemplary TV coverage apparently merited the prize that the King of Spain awards to the best international journalism. Juan Carlos bestowed the award on a film containing footage of those turbulent days in April, showing vicious *chavistas* firing on an innocent protest by unarmed oppositionists. The footage was a sham. The demonstration did not take place, as has since been irrefutably proven. But such details are obviously of no importance, since the prize was not withdrawn.

After decades of rule by Carlos Andrés Pérez and his like in the oil paradise of Saudi Venezuela, the official census recorded 1.5 million illiterate people, and 5 million Venezuelans without papers or civic rights. These and many other invisibles are not prepared to return to Nothingland, the country where nobodies live. They have taken control of their country, which had been so foreign to them; this referendum has proved, once again, that they are there to stay.

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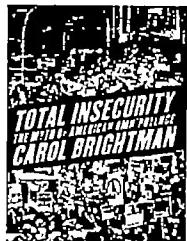
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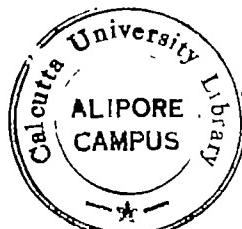
## REMILITARIZING JAPAN

**W**HO HAS BEEN Bush's most faithful follower on the world stage, Koizumi or Blair? Both men can make a strong case. Blair's enthusiasm for Bush's wars has been well documented: he can boast not only the 13,000 British soldiers currently battling in Iraq, but the dismissal of two BBC chiefs for broadcasting doubts about the government's dossier on Saddam's WMD, and the promotion of that document's author, John Scarlett, to head of MI6, with barely a squeak of complaint from the Labour Party or liberal press. Koizumi's contribution has been less reported outside his own country, but in some ways it is more interesting. Unlike Blair, he has effected a major transformation in his country's security policy over the past three years, accompanied by a significant shift in domestic opinion.

Despite the geographical symmetry of the two Eurasian-rim archipelagoes, geopolitically the pair occupy very different positions. Only one was a frontline Cold War state. Abutting the Red Continent, Japan's situation was more comparable to that of Germany in the west—face-to-face with the Soviet superpower, the People's Republic of China and the DPRK, with thousands of miles of ocean at its back. The American conquerors of 1945 had equipped the Constitution which they rapidly drafted for Japan with a permanent renunciation of the nation-state's right to war, or to the maintenance of a national military force of any kind. Article 9 famously states that, in the unvarnished prose of its uniformed drafters:

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.



Instead, us ‘land, sea and air forces’ were installed across Japan, as Washington’s forward base in Asia. With the loss of China, however, the us began to have second thoughts about Article 9. Washington started pressing for it to be rescinded, so that Japanese troops could be deployed in ‘free world’ causes, almost before the ink on the Constitution had dried.<sup>1</sup> For large sections of the Japanese population, however, Article 9 had come to stand for the adamant rejection of the military-imperialist programme that had brought the country to such ruin, a constitutional ‘never again’. Although the ruling Liberal-Democratic Party was committed, from its foundation in the 1950s, to the American goal of deletion of this troublesome clause, it was unable to muster any substantial political or popular support for its amendment. Instead, the establishment of Japan’s Self-Defence Force in 1954 had to be justified on convoluted, extra-constitutional grounds: Article 9 could not have been intended to cancel the country’s inherent right of self-defence. The SDF was therefore legitimate regardless of what the Constitution said, as the minimum necessary force ‘to protect the peace and independence of Japan against direct or indirect threat’.<sup>2</sup> The SDF thus exists without constitutional warrant, on the basis of this higher principle, something akin to natural law. The Japanese public slowly came to accept the compatibility of the SDF with the Constitution, although the ‘peace camp’ position on Article 9 retained its overwhelming popular legitimacy and it was unthinkable—as even the most reactionary of prime ministers agreed—for the SDF ever to function outside Japan.<sup>3</sup> Within the logic of the Cold War, therefore, Japan’s only national defence in a hostile neighbourhood was the us military shield.

### *Washington’s new strategy*

By the 1990s, this entire landscape had been transformed. The Soviet Union had vanished from the map, and the Russia that had replaced it was not a Pacific power. Above all, the People’s Republic of China had emerged as a booming capitalist economy, rapidly forging trade and diplomatic links throughout the region. The DPRK alone could still be claimed

<sup>1</sup> For details: Glenn Hook and Gavan McCormack, *Japan’s Contested Constitution*, London 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Article 3 of the Self-Defense Law, 1954.

<sup>3</sup> Kishi Nobusuke, Prime Minister 1957–60, addressing the lower house of the national Diet on 30 September 1958. (Hayano Tōru, ‘Kishi shushō mo idai na hatoha dattal?’, *Asahi shimbun*, 14 January 2004.)

to pose a conventional Cold War threat. Japan too had changed. By the late 1980s, its economy—though not, of course, its diplomatic or military weight—seemed set to overtake that of the US. Washington was at first slow to formulate a new East Asian policy; initial thinking suggested a tilt to China, to ‘balance’ a Tokyo that, in 1990, had been publicly (if briefly) grudging in its support for the first Gulf War. American arm-twisting had been necessary to extract Japan’s eventual \$15bn contribution.

By the mid-to-late 1990s, however, a new US strategy was beginning to take shape that clearly aimed at the eventual containment of China. As Zalmay Khalilzad outlined in 2001, its central objective was:

the need to preclude the rise of a regional or continental hegemon. This is important for two main reasons: to prevent the US from being denied economic, political and military access to an important part of the globe; and to prevent a concentration of resources that could support a global challenge to the United States on the order of that posed by the former Soviet Union.<sup>4</sup>

One key aim would be to prevent the formation of any close Sino-Japanese security alliance—‘the formation of such a relationship would deal a fatal blow to US political and military influence in Asia’. As well as pushing for an expansion of the free-trade–WTO agenda, the US must actively ‘manage Asia’s transformation’ using a mixture of political, diplomatic and military means: both ‘offshore balancing’, playing large regional powers (China, India, Russia) off against each other to prevent any one emerging as dominant, and a ‘mini-NATO’ containment strategy—a security alliance with the US, Australia, Japan and (hopefully) Korea as its core members, along with lesser fry such as Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines.<sup>5</sup>

The implications for Japan within this strategic vision are far-reaching. Article 9 of the Constitution would have to be rescinded and the SDF further expanded in order to support US-led operations as a fully-fledged

<sup>4</sup> Zalmay Khalilzad et al, *The United States and Asia: Toward a New US Strategy and Force Posture*, Rand Corporation, 2001, p. 43.

<sup>5</sup> Khalilzad et al, *The US and Asia*, ch. 2 and 3. A united Korean peninsula is taken for granted in this medium-term view. Better to proactively scale back the American military presence there, and above all render it less provocatively ‘visible’, Khalilzad argues, in order to be able to keep this vital security foothold for the US–Japan–Korea axis. US troops on the peninsula could both ‘reassure Korea and influence Japan toward peaceful behaviour’, pp. 48–9.

'mini-NATO' partner (the 'Britain of the Far East', as one American strategist puts it).<sup>6</sup> Japan should also be pressed to accelerate its participation in the US Missile Defence programme.

Although the hardware still involves detecting, and pre-emptively destroying, the enemy's missiles, the concept of Ballistic Missile Defence has changed fundamentally since the days of Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative, the unworkably ambitious 'Star Wars' project. Today's US security strategists freely admit that preventing potential missile attacks is only a subsidiary feature of the BMD programmes developed from the Clinton Administration onwards. Far more important is the military-to-military integration that such systems demand, especially at the level of command, control and communications. The installation of BMD in Japan would entail extensive upgrading of the SDF's infrastructure to make it more 'interoperable' with US command systems.<sup>7</sup>

Tokyo had rebuffed 1980s requests for Japanese involvement in BMD, at first fearing a spiralling arms race, then suspecting US designs on Japanese technology. In 1994, however, the Japanese Defence Agency initiated an intensive research project, spurred on the following year by China's deployment of short-range missiles in the Taiwan Straits crisis. The JDA report, published in 1998, concluded that BMD was 'both technically feasible and marginally affordable'. Public support for the project jumped hugely after the firing of a North Korean Taepodong missile over northern Japan in the summer of 1998, ostensibly a failed satellite-launch attempt.<sup>8</sup> The Diet unanimously urged the government to 'undertake every means to secure the safety of the population', and funding for collaborative BMD research with the US was agreed the following year.

<sup>6</sup> Recommendation 3 of the Khalilzad report reads, 'Support efforts in Japan to revise its constitution, to expand its horizon beyond territorial defense, and to acquire capabilities for supporting coalition operations.' The 'Britain of the Far East' is from Richard Armitage, 'The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership', Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defence University, Washington 2000.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Swaine, Rachel Swanger and Takashi Kawakami, *Japan and Ballistic Missile Defence*, Rand Corporation, 2001.

<sup>8</sup> One commentator at least referred ironically to the fortuitous timing of the North Korean projectile, which far overshot the Japanese coastline and plunged harmlessly into the sea: *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 2 September 1998, see Swaine et al, *Japan and BMD*, p.43.

The country of origin of the Taepodong missile is important. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea exercises a powerful hold over the Japanese imagination, one that has become far more salient since the end of the Cold War. An astonishing six hundred books about the country have been published in Japan during the past decade, the overwhelming majority of them hostile. One comic-book account of Kim Jong Il as violent, bloodthirsty and depraved, published in August 2003, sold half a million copies in its first few months, probably more than all the other books in all languages ever written about North Korea. This peculiar wave of Japanese fear and hatred for North Korea has played a large role in the transformation of Japan's security policy.

### *Boots on the ground*

Clinton-era initiatives had also gone some way to transforming the SDF. The Peace-Keeping Organization Law, adopted in 1992, permitted the dispatch of SDF troops to participate in peacekeeping missions in post-conflict Cambodia, Mozambique, the Golan Heights and East Timor. Although confined to road-building or the construction and running of hospitals and refugee camps, these missions nevertheless involved a steady widening and loosening of the official interpretation of Article 9: a force whose only justification was the defence of Japan against direct or indirect threat was committed, however innocuously, to various global theatres. In 1997, the Revised US-Japan Defence Guidelines broadened the SDF's remit again, outlining forms of bilateral cooperation 'in areas surrounding Japan' that included repairs and provisioning of US vessels and aircraft, providing communications equipment, transporting and evacuating civilians, surveillance, intelligence and minesweeping. As the 1998 US *Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region* noted: 'the concept "situations in areas surrounding Japan" embodied in the revised Guidelines is not geographical but situational', to be defined on a case-by-case basis.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, here as elsewhere, the US security wish-list has been hugely accelerated since 9/11—and Bush could not have hoped for a more cooperative opposite number in pushing this through than Koizumi Junichirō. From his first press conference as Prime Minister, in

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<sup>9</sup> US Department of Defence, *The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region*, Washington, DC 1998, p. 21.

April 2001, Koizumi had spoken in favour of revising the Constitution to make it easier for Japan to support the US militarily and to clarify the position of the SDF. Footage of his first meeting with President Bush, two months later, shows Koizumi grinning with delight from his seat on the presidential golf cart. The Japanese media has delightedly reported that not since the days of 'Ron-Yasu' (Reagan and Nakasone) has the relationship between the two countries' leaders been so close.

In October 2001, bluntly advised by Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage to pull its head out of the sand and make sure the Rising Sun flag was visible in the Afghan war, Japan adopted a Terror Special Measures law and sent a flotilla of 24 naval ships, including an Aegis destroyer, to the Indian Ocean; in due course, this provided nearly half the fuel consumed by US Coalition forces in Operation Enduring Freedom. In March 2003, Koizumi promised 'unconditional' support for the coming war in Iraq, ignoring once again the lack of a UN warrant. From early April 2003, with the heavy fighting barely over, he came under increasing pressure to make good his promise by putting Japanese 'boots on the ground' in Iraq. Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz is believed to have been the source of the 'boots' phrase, but the substance of the message was conveyed to Tokyo by multiple routes. Armitage, a frequent visitor to Tokyo, preferred a sporting image: 'It is about time that Japan should quit paying to see the game, and get down to the baseball diamond.'<sup>10</sup>

In May 2003, visiting the presidential ranch in Crawford, Texas, Koizumi gave Bush his *ishin denshin* ('heart to heart') promise to send Japanese troops to Iraq, and also pledged to speed up Japan's BMD review. In return, Bush declared his own 'unconditional' support for Japan's position on the families of the North Korean abductees. This was crucial in terms of winning Japanese domestic support for the dispatch of troops to Iraq: the US forces in Japan were essential to defend the country from North Korean totalitarianism and, in return, Japan could scarcely deny any reciprocal US request.<sup>11</sup> Back in Japan, however, Koizumi still confronted formidable domestic opposition. American pressure was renewed. An anonymous Defence Department spokesman bluntly demanded of his Japanese counterpart, 'Why don't you shape up?', while Armitage

<sup>10</sup> 'Head in sand', *Asahi shimbun*, 5 October 2001; 'boots', *Asahi shimbun*, 9 October 2001; 'baseball diamond', *Yomiuri shimbun*, 11 June 2003.

<sup>11</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, 19 March 2004.

warned Arima Tatsuo, Japan's special ambassador to the Middle East: 'Don't try to back off.'<sup>12</sup>

### *Beyond constitutionalism*

In dispatching an armed body of men to Iraq, Japan was committing itself for the first time in sixty years, albeit in a subordinate and non-combat role, to an illegal and aggressive war. Koizumi was leading his country into uncharted constitutional waters. At one level, his response was to attempt to brush this aside. Constitutional difficulties were so much 'theological quibble'. 'Common sense' was what really mattered—something which, as Prime Minister, he was uniquely qualified to offer: 'In the common sense terms of the people, the SDF is surely "military force" . . . if we talk in terms of principles rather than of pretence . . . the fact is that the constitution itself is out of step with international common sense.' As he put it on another occasion, 'The SDF is an army. To describe it as not a military force goes against common sense . . . It should be called the *Nihon kokugun* [Japanese Army].'<sup>13</sup> The contemptuous populist demagogic with which the Prime Minister of the world's number two economic power dismissed half a century of constitutional debate, riding roughshod over the basic principle of the rule of law, raised scarcely a murmur in Washington, Canberra or London. On the contrary, Koizumi's casual manipulation of his country's Basic Law at a word from the White House was seen as admirably tough.

Under pressure from domestic critics, he produced a phrase from the Constitution's preamble about the desire to 'occupy an honoured place in an international society striving for the preservation of peace' suggesting that this vague sentiment should take precedence over the specific clauses in the body of the text. It was an interpretation without warrant in law that left constitutional scholars aghast. Koizumi claimed that the SDF intervention in Iraq would be confined to humanitarian and reconstruction work in the 'non-combat' area around Samawah (midway

<sup>12</sup> Kyodo, 15 September 2003; *Asahi shimbun*, 9 October 2003.

<sup>13</sup> 'Theological quibble', Maeda Tetsuo, 'Tōhoku Ajia no anzen hoshō to kempō 9-jō', *Sekai*, October 2003, p. 46; 'international common sense', Amaki Naoto, 'Jieitai hitei wa higenjitsuteki gomakashi wa genkai da,' *Ronza*, February 2004, p. 31, quoting Koizumi speaking on 23 October 2001; 'national army', *Asahi shimbun*, 22 February 2004. When, in April 2004, a Fukuoka District Court found Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine to be unconstitutional, he simply shrugged it off, calling the ruling 'inexplicable'. *Asahi shimbun*, 17 July 2004.

between Najaf and Nasiriyah, some 150 miles south of Baghdad). In an effort to win over a reluctant Diet a special investigative commission was dispatched to Iraq, which duly reported that security problems in Samawah were minimal and the SDF would be safe to go. It later transpired, however, that the commission's report had been drafted by Tokyo bureaucrats even before the group left for Iraq in mid-September, and that it had been further edited before being submitted to the Diet to delete any negative details.<sup>14</sup>

The government's decision to send air, sea and ground units of the SDF to Iraq was finally ratified in the House of Representatives at the end of January. But the opposition in the parliament and the country was such that the vote had to be postponed till after midnight, and then the chamber was boycotted *en masse* not only by the main opposition Democratic Party, which protested that the law was unconstitutional, but even by some of the most influential members of the ruling LDP itself, including three of its leading figures: Kamei Shizuka, former head of the LDP Policy Planning Committee, and two ex-Secretaries General of the party, Katō Kōichi and Koga Makoto. A former Posts and Telecommunications Minister and Parliamentary Vice-Defence Minister, Minowa Noboru, launched an action in the Sapporo District Court on 28 January 2004 to have the troop dispatch declared unconstitutional, insisting that reconstruction and humanitarian aid could only be undertaken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Japanese ambassador to Lebanon, Amaki Naoto, wrote to the Prime Minister protesting that the deployment would breach both the Japanese Constitution and international law; for his pains he was summoned to Tokyo and peremptorily sacked.

The history of post-1947 Japanese constitutionalism is replete with examples of governments taking initiatives in the teeth of hostile public opinion and against the considered views of constitutional scholars. An armed force was first created and justified on an exclusively self-defence basis. Its role was then steadily expanded, winning over opposition through the principle of *fait accompli*. None of these previous moves, however, had been as swift or as far-reaching as the transformation that occurred in 2003–4. The restraints that had blocked the SDF, first from existence, then from any role outside Japan, then from any role in hostilities abroad, have one by one been swept aside, till only the

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<sup>14</sup> Okamoto Susumu, 'Donna kokkai ga haken o shōnin shitaka', *Sekai*, April 2004, p. 23.

finest of lines now separates it from frontline war. Helped by the axis of fear and hostility towards North Korea, Koizumi had taken giant steps towards accomplishing the goal that previous conservative leaders had only dreamed of: setting aside forty years of constitutional principle and transforming the SDF into a *de facto* regular army.<sup>15</sup>

### *Luxury fortress*

Koizumi's argument that Samawah was a non-combat zone, since no hostilities were being conducted there by 'states or quasi-state organizations', was of course mere casuistry, worthy to rank with the lies and manipulations practised by Washington and its other allies to justify the war. For the US authorities under whom the SDF served, all of Iraq was a combat zone. Many thousands of Iraqi civilians and hundreds of US soldiers had been killed between Bush's formal declaration that 'major combat operations' were at an end, in May 2003, and the dispatch of Japanese troops in January 2004. For Deputy Defence Secretary Wolfowitz the war was still 'not over yet' in March 2004 and, during the Japanese hostage crisis the following month, Koizumi himself conceded that the situation was so dangerous that Japan should maintain no presence in Iraq other than that of a well-armed military unit.

In Samawah the 550 SDF troops, two-thirds of whom were devoted to security or administration, were housed in 'one of the most formidable military camps planet earth has ever seen': an isolated fortress, secure behind its own moat and barricades, that was also a (fabulously expensive) luxury compound with its own karaoke bar, massage parlour and gymnasium.<sup>16</sup> The troops themselves were being paid 'danger money', a fee of \$275 per day. The fresh water that they were due to supply—80 tons daily to 16,000 people—came at enormous cost: approximately \$360 million, or ¥40 billion, for the first six months. By comparison, a French NGO was providing gas, healthcare, sanitation and 550 tons of fresh water to 100,000 people in Al-Muthanna province for a cost of just

<sup>15</sup> The actual scale of the SDF is not widely appreciated. Its army, at 148,000, is bigger than the British, Italian or French; its navy, in pure tonnage terms, is the fifth largest in the world (after the US, Russia, China and the UK); and its airforce, the twelfth largest in the world, is bigger than Israel's. It has a high proportion of officers and its equipment is the very best. Military spending, at 1 per cent of Japan's vast GDP, is currently second in the world

<sup>16</sup> *Asia Times*, 19 February 2004.

over \$500,000 per year.<sup>17</sup> Political purpose trumped economic sense or humanitarian need.

With the upsurge of Iraqi resistance from April 2004, the SDF men were often confined to base, protected by a combination of American mercenaries and local troops, their humanitarian mission drastically curtailed. It was possible to glimpse something of a behind-the-scenes bureaucratic struggle over these issues when Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it would take over the funding of the French NGO operation—in other words, that it would provide nearly seven times as much water as the SDF, at a fraction of the cost.

Koizumi hailed the June 2004 UNSC resolution 1546 as 'a victory for America's righteous cause'. Without consulting the Diet, he promised Bush (as opposed to Iraq's interim government) that Japanese troops would be committed to the UN-backed Multinational Force. Once again, this was in contravention of the Constitution which proscribes participation in any multinational force. Koizumi finessed this by declaring that SDF participation would be subject to four conditions, which had been accepted by US and British authorities (all that counted, he implied): non-use of force, confinement to non-combat areas, adherence to constitutional limits and operation under Japanese command.<sup>18</sup> The 'unified command' specified in both the UN resolution and Colin Powell's accompanying letter to the Security Council was rendered not by the precise Japanese equivalent but by an unfamiliar and equivocal term that suggested a joint command headquarters; something very different.<sup>19</sup>

The decision to send the SDF to Iraq was taken in the face of popular opposition running at 70 to 80 per cent in early to mid-2003. But by early 2004 Koizumi had successfully turned that into a small majority in favour.<sup>20</sup> Constitutional qualms seem to have been overcome by a flood of patriotic sentiment. Koizumi described the SDF troops as the 'pride

<sup>17</sup> *Japan Times*, 16 May 2004.

<sup>18</sup> NHK television, 17 June 2004.

<sup>19</sup> The UN term *tōitsu sareta shiki* was rendered as *tōgō sareta shireibu*. Editorial, *Asahi shimbun*, 18 June 2004.

<sup>20</sup> Asahi polls reported opposition falling to 55 per cent in December, 48 per cent in January, and 41 (vs 42 in favour) in March. *Yomiuri* found 53 per cent in favour by January, and 58 by February. *Mainichi* found a low of 16 per cent pro-dispatch rising to a high of 50 per cent by March 2004. *Asahi shimbun*, 23 February and 21 March, 2004; *Yomiuri shimbun*, 27 February 2004; *Mainichi shimbun*, 8 March 2004.

of their families, the pride of Japan and the pride of the Japanese people'. The media cooperated enthusiastically, portraying the hometown boys (and some girls) in boots as heroes, lavishing attention on their every move: training in Hokkaido's snow for the Iraq desert, performing rituals of regimental colours, bidding farewell to their tearful families and crowds of flag-waving supporters. Colonel Banshō Kōichirō, the SDF commander, became a media favourite for his rough, homespun sincerity. He appeared day after day on Japanese TV, giving friendly speeches in halting Arabic, discussing how to revive the local hospital or presenting gift sheep to a local community.

The extent to which Koizumi's gamble had paid off, at least in the short run, was starkly revealed during the Japanese hostage crisis of April 2004. While the SDF unit remained largely invisible inside their impregnable, five-star encampment it was, ironically, three young representatives of the Japanese 'peace camp' who were suddenly thrust into the world-media spotlight when they were taken hostage by an Iraqi group. One was a volunteer who had been working with abandoned street children in Baghdad under Saddam Hussein's regime; another a student, trying to publicize the risks of depleted uranium; the third was a photo-journalist who wanted to cover the sufferings and struggles of the Iraqi people. Held for the week of 7–15 April 2004, they were released through the good offices of the Islamic Clerics Association. Koizumi refused to meet with the hostages' families during the crisis and the media, taking its cue from the government, took up the cry of 'irresponsibility' and 'recklessness', of causing Japan trouble and expense. The telephones, faxes and home pages of the abductee families were filled with abusive and intimidating messages. The victims were held to be responsible for their own plight. The hostages arrived home to a barrage of hostile criticism that left them, at least initially, stunned, exhausted, humiliated—and, apart from mumbled words of apology, silent.

### *Costs of compliance*

Watching the Japanese scurrying to comply with Washington's escalating demands, Armitage remarked that the US was 'thrilled' to see that Japan was not 'sitting in the stands any more' but had come out as 'a player on the playing field'.<sup>21</sup> Yet the costs to Japan have been enormous.

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<sup>21</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, 26 September 2003.

In cash terms alone, the country has contributed a staggering sum in subsidies for the US global empire since the end of the Cold War. Indeed, since 9/11 alone Japan has paid around \$30 billion (¥3.3 trillion) to support the American bases on its territory, as well as an annual subsidy of around \$150,000 per head for the 39,691 US troops stationed there.<sup>22</sup> It has also promised to build a brand-new base for the US marine corps in the waters of northern Okinawa, likely to cost at least an additional \$9 billion. On Japan's side, these sums are grudgingly tolerated as the 'taxes' that will guarantee US military backing in the event of a showdown with North Korea. On the American side, the denial by a Senior White House official that the US president would ever think of Japan as 'just some ATM machine' was so bizarre as to suggest that perhaps that might be precisely how he saw it.<sup>23</sup>

Washington has no other ally in this league of open-pocket generosity. Asked for additional reconstruction aid for Iraq, and told that 'billions' was the appropriate unit, Koizumi promised \$5 billion, far in excess of any contribution other than that of the US itself and about three times the sum levied from the whole of Europe. Under further pressure, Tokyo indicated its readiness to forgo a large part of the \$4 billion debt owed it by the government of Iraq. The same willingness to cooperate is evident in the scramble to agree the purchase of the Ballistic Missile Defence system. The Rand Corporation has estimated that a basic system, capable of intercepting 'only a few North Korean missiles', would cost approximately \$20 billion, and a full-coverage system more than the current Japanese defence budget.<sup>24</sup>

Such costs must be set in the context of Japan's decade-long stagnation. The country's bubble-era excess liquidity has long evaporated. Bad debt, chronic unemployment and under-employment, bankruptcies, the virtual

<sup>22</sup> See table in Maeda Hisao, '2004 nendo bōei yosanan o kiro', *Gunshuku mondai shiryō*, April 2004, p. 47.

<sup>23</sup> Takao Hishinuma and Eiji Hirose, 'US official says Japan "not just some ATM"', Daily Yomiuri Online, 10 October 2003.

<sup>24</sup> Swaine et al, *Japan and BMD*, p. 67. Whether it would work is unknown. The best scientific and military opinion seems to be that the present system is unproven, but that protection would be confined to places within a 15km radius of the PAC-3 batteries. The capital and major (US) base complexes might be protected, but much of Japan would not be. See Handa Shigeru, 'Misairu bōei tōnyū giman o abaku,' *Gendai*, March 2004; Leo Sartori, 'Bush's Missile Defense System: Does it Pass Muster?', Centre for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, Washington, DC 2003.

or actual nationalization of major banks, social despair in the country's peripheries, gloom and anxiety for the future, especially for the public welfare and pension systems, even among the supposedly comfortably employed middle class, persist. The 2004 Budget projects tax revenues of just under 42 trillion yen and expenditure of 82 trillion yen: in other words nearly 45 per cent is dependent on bonds, or borrowing.<sup>25</sup> The prospect is one of falling population, spending cuts and tax increases. Education, welfare and overseas aid costs are being shaved, small and medium-sized businesses cut loose to fend with 'market forces'. While demonstrating its 'faithfulness' to Washington, the Japanese government has plundered the savings of past generations and the patrimony of the unborn, raising a Mt Fuji of debt over the land.<sup>26</sup>

In assessing the country's changing world role after 9/11, the Japanese media have for the most part been reluctant to address the issue of responsibility for the totality of the system it thereby supports. As the first anniversary of the Iraq war passed in spring 2004, the American-led occupation was increasingly mired in violence, its legitimacy in tatters. Since then, civilian casualties have mounted, Muslim holy places have been attacked, the Abu Ghraib tortures have been exposed and Iraqi opposition has begun to coalesce into resistance. By the time the US Administrator, Paul Bremer, stepped aside on 28 June, leaving his hand-picked Interim Government in place, the occupation was unraveling in a series of scandals and atrocities. Japan's 'unconditional' support has meant commitment to a process of torture, assassination and apparently indiscriminate attacks on civilian and religious targets. This is the system to which Japan's own SDF is expected to accommodate itself. If Japan has indeed become what Armitage describes as a 'player', there can be no mistake as to who is the captain of the team, and no doubting the deadly seriousness of the game, as Armitage has spelled out in another context: 'Australian sons and daughters . . . would be willing to die to help defend the United States. That's what an alliance means.'<sup>27</sup>

Yet even these financial and moral costs pale compared to the prospect of a spiralling East Asian arms race, driven by the installation of fabulously expensive BMD systems in the East Pacific and a 'mini-NATO' aiming at

<sup>25</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, 20 December 2003.

<sup>26</sup> See my *The Emptiness of Japanese Affluence*, New York 2001, and 'The End of Japan's Construction State?', NLR 13, Jan–Feb 2002.

<sup>27</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 September 2001.

Chinese containment. Locking itself into the American embrace, 'turning away' from Asia—more properly: turning towards it with a hostile, militarized face—engenders a vicious cycle, further blocking Japan from reconciliation and cooperation with Asia and in turn emboldening the US to escalate its own demands. It is an attitude that Sakakibara Eisuke, once known as 'Mr Yen' for his power over global currency markets, has described as 'depraved ideological conservatism', under which Japan follows the US at all times and under any circumstances.<sup>28</sup> Yet there is an alternative path. If the North Korean problem were resolved, then relations between Japan and North Korea, as between North and South Korea, could be normalized. With military tensions drained from the region, the comprehensive incorporation of Japan within Washington's global hegemonic project could become harder to justify. Japan could turn its attention towards its Asian neighbours and shift its policy priority from being a trustworthy ally for the US to attending to its own multiple problems and becoming a trustworthy member of a future Asian commonwealth.

Has Koizumi's recent policy on North Korea reflected signs of Japanese ambivalence on these questions, forcing a change of tack in Washington—or, on the contrary, has Tokyo merely followed the US lead as, bogged down in Iraq, it turns toward a 'Libyan' solution for Pyongyang?<sup>29</sup> As noted, well-fanned populist fears of the DPRK have played a critical role in the post 9/11 transformation of the SDF. Without North Korea, it would most likely have been impossible to pass the raft of 'contingency' war legislation adopted in 2003–4, including laws that had been on the wish list of conservative governments throughout the Cold War but had always been blocked by socialist and communist opposition. Now they could be pushed through, with little debate and the support of around 80 per cent of Diet members. Some of the new laws were explicitly designed with North Korea in mind: authorizing interdiction of suspect shipping,

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<sup>28</sup> Sakakibara Eisuke, 'Japanese nationalism: Conservatives have derailed', *Japan Times*, 2 May 2004.

<sup>29</sup> On 22 July 2004 the *Financial Times* reported that: 'John Bolton, US under-secretary of state for arms control, said in Seoul yesterday that Libya's decision last year to abandon its nuclear programme was a blueprint for how North Korea could improve relations with the outside world. Mr Bolton urged Kim Jong Il, North Korea's leader, to consult his Libyan counterpart, Colonel Muammer Gadaffi, about Tripoli's decision. He said Libya was already benefiting from the lifting of some US sanctions, saying hotels in Tripoli were "teeming with western businessmen".'

the blocking of foreign-exchange transactions or exclusion of ships of a designated country from entering Japanese ports. Others spelled out special emergency powers, enabling the Prime Minister to impose a virtual martial-law regime and compel compliance by local authorities and citizens if he deemed it necessary.<sup>30</sup>

Koizumi both benefits from and plays his part in feeding the national paranoia. Nevertheless, he has also now clearly adopted the cause of normalization of relations with North Korea as his major political commitment. Alone among current world-political leaders he has visited Kim Jong Il twice, in 2002 and 2004. Departing for Pyongyang on 22 May 2004, Koizumi pledged to restore trust between Japan and North Korea, so that 'abnormal relations can be normalized, hostile relations turned to friendly relations, and confrontation to cooperation', and to strive to normalize relations within his remaining two years of office, if possible within a single year. After their meeting he declared Kim to be 'mild-mannered and cheerful', 'very smart' and 'quick to make jokes'—in other words, someone to do business with.<sup>31</sup> During their talks, Koizumi seems to have gone beyond the official US position of CVID (complete, verifiable, irreversible disarmament), and afterwards pressed the Dear Leader's suit for direct talks with Bush. With Japan's voice added to the Chinese, Russian and South Korean calls for a negotiated solution to the North Korean question, the US has also for the first time presented elements of a 'roadmap' for settlement.

### *Beyond neo-nationalism?*

Up till now, Koizumi's nationalism has been more pose than substance. Faithful to Washington on almost all issues—with a possible deviation on North Korea—he has sought to disguise himself with strong Japanese accents. The more he serves foreign purposes, the more important it is that he seem and sound the nationalist. Controversial gestures such as his visits to Yasukuni Shrine to pay his respects to the country's war dead are probably best seen not as a sign of a reviving nationalism but as an empty gesture to compensate for an abandoned one; the affirmation at an abstract and purely symbolic level of what has been repudiated in

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<sup>30</sup> For a comprehensive list of the legislation. Richard Tanter, 'With eyes wide shut: Japan, Heisei Militarization and the Bush Doctrine', Peter Van Ness and Mel Gurtov, eds, *Asia and the Bush Doctrine*, New York, forthcoming.

<sup>31</sup> *Asahi shimbun*, 28 May and 3 July 2004.

substance.<sup>32</sup> Political and military subordination to the US require such rhetoric and symbolism—in fact, a form of neo-nationalism. However, resolution of the North Korean issue could transform this equation.

The Japanese convention of serving the empire loyally and unquestioningly has been sanctified by half a century of evolution as an affluent imperial dependency. During the Cold War, the benefits were large and the costs acceptable. However, the blueprints for the twenty-first century call for a new level of subjugation. On Iraq, Japan toes the line, but the prospect of future developments on the Korean peninsula may cause it to waver. In the 'Pyongyang Declaration' of September 2002, for the first time since the ignominious collapse of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere in 1945, the Japanese Prime Minister announced a commitment to the building of a 'Northeast Asia' of peace and prosperity. That he chose to make such an affirmation in the context of a joint declaration with the North Korean leader made it so much more remarkable.<sup>33</sup> On Iraq, Koizumi has gone far beyond even Blair in proving his commitment to Washington: steamrolling military deployment through a more petulant parliament, all but tearing up the Constitution. At the same time, Tokyo may not be immune to the traditionalist Asian dreams of Japanese conservatism, albeit in twenty-first century terms. How long Koizumi, or whoever might succeed him as prime minister, can contain the contradiction, pursuing simultaneously Asianism and Americanism, remains to be seen.

In the first half of the twentieth century seven million Japanese soldiers marched off to distant battlefields, shouts of 'Banzai' ringing in their ears. Not one of them was ever sent, officially, on a mission of 'aggression'. Like Colonel Banshō, their task was always honourable: to resist the aggression of others (the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5), to fulfill duties to allies (the Boxer China war of 1900 and World War One), to

<sup>32</sup> For recent discussion on the theme of reviving nationalism: Eugene Matthews, 'Japan's New Nationalism', *Foreign Affairs*, November–December 2003, and Steven Clemons, 'Nationalism—Old News or New Worry?', *Daily Yomiuri*, 9 December 2003. See also McCormack, 'New Tunes for an Old Song. Nationalism and Identity in Post-Cold War Japan', in Roy Starrs, ed., *Nations Under Siege: Globalization and Nationalism in Asia*, New York 2002; Ishida Hidenari, Ukai Satoshi, Komori Yōichi and Takahashi Tetsuya, '21 seiki no manifesuto—datsu "parasaito nashonarizumu"', *Sekai*, August 2000.

<sup>33</sup> Wada Haruki, *Tōhoku Ajia kyōdō no ie*, Heibonsha 2003, p. 166

help a neighbouring people (the catastrophic intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1918–1922), to defend Japanese lives and property against bandits, terrorists and warlords and help construct an order of justice, peace and prosperity (in China and later Southeast Asia from 1927 to 1945). Only long after the event did history render a different, much harsher judgement. Some Japanese scholars have argued that the same will be true of the Koizumi dispatch to Iraq.<sup>34</sup>

However Japan addresses the future dilemmas of regional and global policy, its security posture has already been transformed. The Constitution has steadily been emptied of content, the constraints of Article 9's pacifism dismissed and the country set on the path towards becoming a regional military power, closely integrated with the US. Even in the context of normalizing relations with North Korea, these developments already make it harder for Japan to play an independent 'Asian' role in any emerging East Asian community of nations.

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<sup>34</sup> See, for example, the analyses by the military affairs specialist Maeda Tetsuo, 'Kyūsoku ni rinsen jōsei totonoeru jieitai', *Sekai*, April 2004, and Kang Sangjung of Tokyo University, in Kang Sangjung and Katō Shūichi, 'Rekishi no bunkiten ni tatté', *Ronza*, April 2004. Kang has described the US operations in Iraq as an aggressive war comparable to Japan's 1931 invasion of China—both characterized by the belief that military superiority would be decisive. In his view, Iraq was America's Manchukuo, a base from which to try to transform the Middle East as Japan had once thought to transform the whole of China, and just as likely to mark the beginnings of imperial decline.



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**SECOND SESSION:** Said and the Media

*Chair:* Greg Philo

*Speakers:* Alexander Cockburn, Graham Usher, Hani Shukrallah

**THIRD SESSION:** Literature and Literary Criticism

*Chair:* Sabry Hafez

*Speakers:* Ferial Ghazoul, Tom Paulin, Timothy Brennan

**FOURTH SESSION:** Palestine, Politics and History

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*Speakers:* Ella Shohat, Nadia Abu El-Haj, Joseph Massad

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## PROFITS OR GLORY?

*The Twenty-Eighth Elul of Arik Sharon*

'Rien pour la gloire! Glory brings no profit! Peace everywhere and always! War depresses the quotations of the three and four per cents!' the France of the Bourse jobbers had inscribed on her banner.

Karl Marx, *The Class Struggles in France*

WHEN ARIEL SHARON and his 1,000-strong military escort marched to the Temple Mount/Noble Sanctuary in Jerusalem on 28 September 2000 (or 28 Elul 5760), triggering the second *intifada*, the former general was almost universally considered a political has-been.<sup>1</sup> Well into his seventies, he was then the acting chairman of a crisis-ridden, medium-sized political party (albeit the country's second largest), wherein he was overshadowed by the younger and more popular Benjamin Netanyahu. Only a few months later, Sharon won a landslide in the prime ministerial elections, and in 2003 led his party to a stunning victory that doubled its Knesset representation. How should we understand this transformation?

In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx demonstrates how, as he put it in the preface to the second edition, 'the class struggle in France created circumstances and relationships that made it possible for a grotesque mediocrity to play a hero's part'. Sharon is certainly not a grotesque mediocrity. He is a shrewd and cunning politician, and was one of Israel's most distinguished military field commanders. He has a clear strategic vision for his country, which he has pursued with skill and determination. Since his election in February 2001, he has proved himself a very effective leader, capable of transforming both Israeli and

Palestinian societies in ways that were considered impossible only a short time before. Nevertheless, the circumstances of Sharon's rise to power and the policies pursued by his government may be usefully illuminated by analogy with those of Louis Bonaparte in Marx's analysis. As I understand it, Marx's key argument is that the class struggle in France had been stalemated in the late 1840s and early 1850s, forcing the state, in the person of Louis Bonaparte, not only to govern France but to rule it as well.<sup>1</sup> The state then used its power to promote the economic programme of the French bourgeoisie while denying their liberal political and cultural aspirations. (It also engaged in an aggressive foreign policy that led to a disastrous defeat by Germany in 1870.) This phenomenon—a state which serves the economic interests of the business class, while trampling on its declared political and cultural agenda—is precisely what has been taking place in Israel since February 2001.

### *Phases of development*

The most puzzling thing about Sharon's policies since he took office is not the fact that his government is engaged in a war of 'politicide' against the Palestinians.<sup>2</sup> It is rather that it is simultaneously engaged in an economic onslaught against all but the very wealthiest Israelis. For most of its history Israel has pursued an aggressive policy towards the Palestinians and the surrounding Arab states—but, partly in order to mobilize effectively behind that policy, it also promoted a corporatist political-economic system, in which the profit motive was tempered

<sup>1</sup> For their very useful comments on an earlier draft of this essay, I would like to thank David Abraham, John Ehrenberg, Zeev Emmerich, Samuel Farber, Rami Kaplan, Gal Levy, Michael Shalev, Raphael Ventura, Victor Wolfenstein and, especially, Horit Herman Peled. Much of the historical information and analysis for the period before 2001 is drawn from Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship*, Cambridge 2002. The views expressed in the essay, and the errors left in it, are entirely my own.

<sup>2</sup> For a range of views on the question of state-class relations in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* see Bob Jessop, 'The Political Scene and the Politics of Representation. Periodizing Class Struggle and the State in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*'; Paul Wetherly, 'Making Sense of the "Relative Autonomy" of the State', both in Mark Cowling and James Martin, eds, *Marx's 'Eighteenth Brumaire' (Post)modern Interpretations*, London 2002, pp 179–94 and 195–208, respectively.

<sup>3</sup> Baruch Kimmerling, *Politicide: Ariel Sharon's War Against the Palestinians*, London 2003. See also his 'From Barak to the Roadmap', NLR 23, September–October 2003.

by national considerations.<sup>4</sup> Forged in the context of settler struggle with the Palestinians, the Israeli state—highly intrusive but formally democratic—was intensively engaged in the control and deployment of societal resources, both directly and through the umbrella labour organization, Histadrut. A pillar of pre-statehood Zionist colonization, the Histadrut also possessed an economic empire encompassing, at its height, agricultural, manufacturing, construction, marketing, transportation and financial concerns, as well as a whole network of social-service organizations. Until the 1990s this conglomerate controlled about 25 per cent of the economy and employed around a quarter of the labour force. A roughly equal share of the economy, plus virtually all land, was owned directly by the state. During the four-and-a-half decades of Labour rule (1933–77), this construct played a crucial role in maintaining the privileged position, and political and cultural hegemony, of a large segment of the veteran Labour Zionist *ashkenazi* community.

Ironically, it was this privileged sector that first began pressuring the state to liberalize the economy. By the mid 60s, the initial phase of Israel's post-1948 economic development—rapid growth, fuelled by massive immigration and gift capital, in the form of German reparations and donations from world Jewry—had been exhausted. A 'crisis of full employment' had developed, threatening to undermine state and Histadrut control over the labour market. The state responded with a two-pronged move: it sharply reduced its own expenditures, primarily in the construction of public housing; and, for the first time, opened the 'Jewish' labour market to Palestinian citizens. The spending cuts plunged the Israeli economy into the worst recession in its history—still known in Israel as 'The Recession'—but a swift recovery took place following the territorial conquests of the 1967 war.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, New York 2001; Michael Shalev, *Labour and the Political Economy in Israel*, Oxford 1992.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Shalev, 'Labour, State and Crisis', *Industrial Relations*, vol. 23, no. 3, 1984, pp. 362–86, 'Liberalization and the Transformation of the Political Economy', in Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, eds, *The New Israel: Peacemaking and Liberalization*, Boulder, co 2000, p. 132. The close temporal connection between the recession and the 1967 war calls for careful analysis of the latter's origins. Despite Israel's 30-year archive law, the relevant documents have not been declassified, which perhaps explains the neglect of the subject in revisionist Israeli historiography to date. For a very preliminary attempt, see Yagil Levy and Yoav Peled, 'The Utopian Crisis of the Israeli State', in Russell Stone and Walter Zenner, eds, *Critical Essays on Israeli Social Issues and Scholarship*, Albany, NY 1994, pp. 201–26.

The 1967 war and occupation of the Palestinian territories inaugurated the second phase of Israel's economic development. Not only were the domestic market and labour pool expanded significantly, with the addition of one million Palestinians, but the French arms embargo, imposed on the eve of the war, gave rise to Israel's military-industrial complex. The mostly state- or Histadrut-owned arms industries became the engine pulling the Israeli economy behind them, employing 25 per cent of the manufacturing labour force in the peak year of 1982–83. Though they benefited greatly from the increase in the global arms trade in the 70s and 80s, they were primarily sustained by Israeli defence expenditures, which skyrocketed after the 1973 war with the onset of significant US military aid.<sup>6</sup>

### *Onset of liberalization*

In 1977, for the first time ever, Labour lost the general election to Likud, as fifteen of its Knesset seats were taken by the Democratic Movement for Change, a new party representing the emergent managerial strata. The development signalled the transformation of this layer from an essentially rentier bureaucratic class, living off its control of state-managed capital transfers, to a bourgeois class in a truer sense, engaged in a relatively fast and successful process of capital accumulation.<sup>7</sup>

Once in office Likud launched an economic liberalization programme designed to dismantle the corporatist structure that had been the mainstay of Labour's rule. The Histadrut refused to co-operate in imposing wage cuts and downsizing the public sector, and Likud's policy brought the economy to the brink of hyper-inflation: 450 per cent a year in 1985. One consequence, intended or otherwise, of the high inflation rate was to weaken the statist institutions, among them the arms industry. In 1985 a Labour–Likud national unity government succeeded in disciplining the Histadrut and instituted the Emergency Economic Stabilization Plan, which halted monetary inflation and laid the groundwork for the successful liberalization of the economy. The structural elements of the reform constituted 'a frontal attack on mechanisms that had previously protected societal interests, directly or indirectly, at the expense of the state:

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<sup>6</sup> Jonathan Nitzan and Shimshon Bichler, 'Going Global: Differential Accumulation and the Great U-Turn in South Africa and Israel', *Review of Radical Political Economics*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2001, pp. 45–7; Shalev, 'Liberalization', p. 132.

<sup>7</sup> Shalev, *Labour and the Political Economy*.

devaluations, protectionism, wage indexation, unlinked public lending, and diffuse investment incentives'.<sup>8</sup> Cutbacks to the latter, including subsidies to the giant state- and Histadrut-owned corporations, severely affected Israel's military-industrial complex, which had already suffered from a drastic reduction in military procurement following the 1979 peace treaty with Egypt. This process culminated in the 1989 cancellation of Israel's most ambitious arms production project, the Lavi jet fighter, after the first Bush Administration halted US support.

The privatization or closure of Histadrut or nationally owned companies signified a fundamental change in the role of the state in Israeli society. While many private businesses (not to mention their workers) also suffered, liberalization—shifting resources from the state to the market—was essential for the formation of the new capitalist class. The 1985 reforms allowed an Israeli capital market, largely free of state direction, to emerge for the first time. The productive resources of the shrinking military-industrial complex became the basis for Israel's privately owned, export-oriented hi-tech industry, which would serve as the new engine of the economy for the 1990s.

When a Labour majority returned to power in 1992, a momentous struggle developed between its neo-liberal wing—aided by the smaller, more uniformly liberal Meretz—and its welfarist wing, with its power base in the Histadrut. The aim of the neo-liberal Labourites, headed by Hayim Ramon and Yossi Beilin,<sup>9</sup> was to dismantle both the Histadrut and the remains of the public-sector economy in general. By the 1990s privatizations had stripped the Histadrut of most of its productive resources, and its health-care system—known as *Kupat Cholim*, or sick fund—always its main vehicle for attracting membership, was now its most significant asset. At its peak the *Kupat Cholim* provided healthcare services to 70 per cent of the population, with the rest mostly covered by similar, smaller health-maintenance organizations, generally associated with various political parties.

As Rabin's Public Health Minister, Ramon first attempted to nationalize the entire health-care system via the State Health Insurance Law, but

<sup>8</sup> Shalev, 'Liberalization', p. 133.

<sup>9</sup> In March 2004 Beilin was elected leader of Yahad, the successor party to Meretz. Beilin was not only an early promoter of neo-liberalism but also the architect of the Oslo Accords and the moving spirit behind the symbolic Geneva Accord signed in December 2003.

was blocked by opposition from Labour's Histadrut wing. After a failed attempt by his allies to take over the Histadrut through Labour, Ramon quit the party and in 1994 ran successfully for Secretary General of the Histadrut at the head of an ad hoc coalition that also included Shas and Meretz. The State Health Insurance Law was duly passed, and Ramon returned to the government as Minister of the Interior. On January 1, 1995, the state took over the health-care system, shifting its financial basis from voluntary membership fees to a health tax. In an American context, this might have meant a major expansion of the welfare state. In Israel, however, in spite of the universalization of coverage it entailed, it signified a major step towards the privatization of the health-care system.

Historically, the health-care system operated on a deficit-financing basis, with the state covering the shortfall at the end of each year. As of 1995 the *Kupot Cholim* have been required to operate within strict government-set budget limits. They have also been forced to compete with each other, diverting resources to advertising and catering to younger, more affluent social groups. The result has been increased social costs and the deterioration of services—and a rapid expansion of private-sector providers for those who can afford to supplement declining state provision. The 1995 Law also barred sick funds from making membership conditional on affiliation to any other organization; with the link between the Histadrut and its *Kupat Cholim* severed, the former has lost two thirds of its membership—from 1.6 million members in 1994 to 600,000 in 1998—and has had to be reconstituted solely as a trade-union federation.

Economic liberalization was accompanied by political reform. Intra-party primary elections, and personal election of the prime minister by the entire electorate—making the prime minister a semi-president, us-style—were introduced. The effect was to weaken the major political parties and, paradoxically, the prime minister as well, and to increase the influence of large donors who could help finance electoral campaigns.<sup>10</sup> Two Basic Laws, enjoying constitutional status, were enacted: 'Human Dignity and Freedom', and 'Freedom of Occupation'. These allowed, for the first time, judicial review of primary legislation by the Supreme

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<sup>10</sup> All three PMs elected under that system—Netanyahu, Barak and Sharon—became involved in campaign contribution scandals.

Court—signifying a major power shift from the elected legislature to the non-elected judiciary. The Bank of Israel was given the authority to determine interest rates, which, in the context of a newly evolved capital market, made it a powerful actor in the determination of economic policy.<sup>11</sup>

### *Executives for peace*

Economic liberalization and political reform were not sufficient, however, to ensure that the Israeli bourgeoisie would benefit from the processes of globalization. The Arab-Israeli conflict had stymied both foreign investment in Israel and the operations of Israeli businesses abroad. Global brand names—in fast food, Japanese autos, retail and financial services—were absent from the Israeli market. For over twenty years the Occupied Territories had provided a partial substitute for the international market and a clandestine outlet to the Arab world, circumventing the Arab boycott. With the outbreak of the first *intifada* in 1987, however, the economic benefits of the Occupation—a cheap and reliable labour force and captive market—began to be outweighed by its costs.

With the profits of the Occupation and the war economy generally now in decline (defence spending had fallen from over 30 per cent of GDP in the early 70s to 8 per cent in the early 90s), and with the global market now offering much greater gains than state tutelage, growing segments of Israel's emergent bourgeoisie had both 'push' and 'pull' reasons for supporting a territorial agreement with the Palestinians. In the complacent words of two leading neo-classical Israeli economists, 'there cannot be a better companion to *aliya* [Jewish immigration] in boosting long-lasting growth and economic prosperity than genuine peace in the Middle East'.<sup>12</sup>

In 1991 the first Bush Administration, freshly triumphant in the Gulf War and preparing to convene the Madrid Middle East peace conference, made provision of the \$10 billion loan guarantees requested by Yitzhak Shamir's Likud government to help settle immigrants from the former USSR contingent upon the complete cessation of Israeli settlement

<sup>11</sup> Ran Hirschl, 'The Great Economic-Juridical Shift: The Legal Arena and the Transformation of Israel's Economic Order', in Shafir and Peled, *The New Israel: Peacemaking and Liberalization*, Boulder, co 2000, pp. 189–215.

<sup>12</sup> Assaf Razin and Efraim Sadka, *The Economy of Modern Israel: Malaise and Promise*, Chicago 1993.

activity in the Occupied Territories. Shamir's refusal to accede to this demand became a major issue in the 1992 election campaign, which ended in a Labour victory and Yitzhak Rabin's return as premier. During the campaign—the first ever to turn explicitly on the fate of the Occupied Territories—prominent business people flocked to support the 'peace' candidate, Rabin. A week before the elections Dov Lautman, CEO of the leading textile company Delta Galil Industries, former president of the Israeli Manufacturers' Association and a major figure in the business community, declared that the primary obstacle to foreign investment in the Israeli economy was regional instability. Only the combination of a proper economic policy with progress in the peace talks, he argued, could make Israel attractive to overseas investors.<sup>13</sup> In November 1992 Lautman added the Arab boycott to his list of conditions that hurt Israel economically, urging the government and the business community to make its abolition a top policy priority. The same point was also made by Dan Gillerman, President of the Association of Chambers of Commerce, who claimed that the boycott had cost the Israeli economy \$44 billion.<sup>14</sup> In January 1993 Lautman went a step further and declared that a breakthrough in the stalled Madrid peace talks would signal a turning point for the Israeli economy. As soon as news of the agreement reached in Oslo in September 1993 was leaked to the press, Israel's business leaders took out a paid advertisement in the main liberal daily, *Haaretz*, on the eve of the Jewish New Year, calling on Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to 'bring peace for the sake of good years'.

The most prominent business figure 'serving in the cause of peace'—his own formulation in a 1995 interview with Gershon Shafir and myself—was Benny Gaon. Gaon had presided over the privatization of Koor, the Histadrut's flagship industrial corporation, which became Israel's first multinational holding company; he continued to serve as its CEO for a number of years afterwards, becoming a multi-millionaire in the process. Under Gaon's leadership Koor pioneered attempts to set up joint Israeli-Arab business ventures, both before and after the Oslo agreement. At

<sup>13</sup> Lautman made these remarks at the 1992 Jerusalem Business Conference, an important annual business gathering. In the interest of full disclosure, Lautman is also Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Tel Aviv University, my place of employment.

<sup>14</sup> Gillerman was appointed UN ambassador by Sharon, and is currently defending his policies in that forum. This is a pointed illustration of the shift of the Israeli bourgeoisie away from a negotiated peace, to be discussed below.

the 1994 Jerusalem Business Conference Gaon called on Israel's leading corporations 'to take the risk, and invite foreign capital for joint investment projects' that could exploit the unique Middle East combination of Israeli know-how, the Gulf states' financial resources and the cheap labour available in the non-oil producing Arab countries.

The economic calculations of Gaon and his colleagues proved to be correct, although the 'new Middle East' envisioned by their coteries of politicians, journalists and academics never materialized. After the Oslo agreement, many foreign markets that had been closed to Israeli firms, in the Middle East and beyond, had opened up, leading to unprecedented economic prosperity in the 1990s. By the same token, foreign direct investment in the Israeli economy, virtually non-existent before 1993, reached \$1.5–2 billion a year by the middle of the decade.<sup>15</sup> Symbolic of the nexus between the Israeli peace camp and neoliberalization, in 1993 Omri Padan, a founding member of Peace Now, was granted the first McDonald's concession in Israel.

### *Mizrachi opposition*

In stark contrast to the business agenda, however, the Jewish working class opposed both the Oslo process and neoliberalization, for a combination of economic and cultural reasons. The rapidly increasing income inequality since the mid-80s had hit this layer hard. The tax and transfer payments that had somewhat mitigated its effects were coming under attack from the acolytes of liberalization, as were social services in general. Education and health care, in particular, had deteriorated significantly for those who could not afford private supplements to state provision.

Opposition to marketization was not, however, articulated in economic terms, but rather in cultural and political ones. There were three main reasons for this. Firstly, since 1977, there have been few differences between Israel's major political parties on the issue of economic liberalization—it will be recalled that a Likud–Labour government launched the 1985 Stabilization Plan, and that it was Labour that had broken the back of the Histadrut. With no political, social or intellectual forces offering an alternative economic analysis, opposition to neoliberalism could be expressed

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<sup>15</sup> Michael Shalev, 'Have Globalization and Liberalization "Normalized" Israel's Political Economy?', *Israel Affairs*, vol. 5, nos. 2–3, 1999, pp. 121–55.

only in a moral register—almost inevitably, in the Israeli context, couched in terms of ethno-national Jewish solidarity.

Secondly, the significant overlap of class and ethnicity—with *ashkenazim* comprising the bulk of the middle and upper classes, and *mizrachim* and Palestinians most of the working class—has played an important role. Although clearly marginalized relative to other Jews, in Israeli society as a whole the *mizrachim* have formed not a peripheral but a semi-peripheral group, located in an intermediary position between *ashkenazim* and Palestinians. The *mizrachim* have sought to ally themselves with the Jewish state and the *ashkenazim* who control it, rather than with the Palestinians, with whom they share many economic and cultural characteristics—conceptualizing their marginalization in cultural and ethnic rather than class terms.

Lastly, neoliberalization had cultural consequences that were viewed as a threat to traditional Jewish values. All four elements of the traditional relationship between the state and religious Jews in Israel—monopoly of Rabbinic courts in matters of family law, observance of the Sabbath and of *kashrut* (dietary law) in the public sphere, and the exemption of *yeshivah* students from military service—were challenged by liberal, secular Jews, who found important allies in the Supreme Court and in the one million immigrants from the former USSR, many of whom are not Jewish by orthodox religious definition. In addition, women's rights, tolerance for diverse sexual lifestyles, cultural Americanization and the growing political assertiveness of Israel's Palestinian citizens, all contributed to the anxiety of more traditional social groups, many of them working-class *mizrachim*.

For working-class and lower-middle-class *mizrachim*, then, neoliberalization has meant not only economic decline, in both relative and absolute terms, but also reduced social services and a frontal assault on their cultural values. The (Jewish) state, which has traditionally treated them as second-class citizens compared to the *ashkenazim*, has assumed growing importance for them both as bulwark against the ravages of the market and as affirmation of their privileged status as Jews. They have clung ever more strongly to their ethno-national identity, infusing it with an increasing religious content and making it a platform from which to demand the protection and extension of their social-citizenship rights. Correctly identifying the proposed territorial settlement with the

Palestinians as the capstone of neoliberalization, they came to view it with ever greater hostility.

*Mizrachi* attitudes towards the Palestinians, and the Oslo process in general, were also shaped by intense competition with them in the labour market, from the early 60s to the mid-90s.<sup>16</sup> This gave rise to fear and hostility towards the Palestinians, and a desire among many *mizrachim* to exclude them from society altogether and/or seriously limit the rights of those who are Israeli citizens. With the Oslo Accords, a number of labour-intensive industrial plants relocated to Egypt, Jordan and other countries, depriving several 'development towns' with predominantly working-class *mizrachi* populations of their primary source of employment. By 1998, for instance, Lautman's Delta had moved 50 per cent of its production out of Israel; the same year was the most profitable in the company's history so far. The gap between the positive 'peace dividend' garnered by capital and the negative dividend suffered by labour naturally affected the newly unemployed workers' perceptions of the peace process. As one commentator put it:

While the middle and upper classes in Israel are zestfully attracted by the Peace Process and by the globalist logic of 'McWorld', the lower classes remain behind as social victims of globalization, and they react by identifying the Peace Process with their societal adversaries, and by adherence to 'localist', ultra-nationalistic and fundamentalist 'Jihad' orientations.<sup>17</sup>

### *Rise of Shas*

So far, the only successful attempt to mobilize the *mizrachi* working class politically in the context of neoliberalization has also been couched in cultural-religious terms. Established in 1984, Shas appealed to lower-class *mizrachim* with, on the one hand, calls for the restoration of traditional Jewish values such as patriarchy, charity and religious observance—allegedly defiled by secular *ashkenazi* Zionism—and on the other, a rhetoric of social justice, backed up by an array of social-service institutions of its own, including an autonomous educational

<sup>16</sup> After the Oslo Accords, non-citizen Palestinian workers were gradually removed from the Israeli labour market and replaced with workers from around the world.

<sup>17</sup> Uri Ram, "'The Promised Land of Business Opportunities': Liberal Post-Zionism in the Global Age', in Shafir and Peled, *The New Israel*, p. 230

system. The success of this political formula over the years has been impressive. Drawing most of its voters from the ranks of Likud, Shas went from four Knesset seats in 1984 to seventeen in 1999, compared to Likud's nineteen. Only in the 2003 general elections, with Likud doubling its strength, was Shas's representation reduced to eleven MKs.<sup>18</sup> Until Sharon's current coalition, formed in 2003, Shas had participated in every Israeli government since it first entered the Knesset in 1984.

Despite its rhetoric, however, Shas has never presented an alternative to the prevailing neoliberal vision, and has consistently voted, after some bargaining, for every economic liberalization measure passed by the government. Welfare, however, was a different matter. Here, Shas's presence in the cabinet, and the electoral threat it posed to Likud, had a mitigating effect on its coalition partners' assaults, at least in terms of guaranteeing redistributive taxes and transfers. Welfare expenditures as a percentage of GNP remained stable, and even rose, throughout the period of liberalization—a situation lamented by the journalistic and academic spokespeople of the Israeli elite, which had developed an almost pathological hatred of Shas.<sup>19</sup>

Shas was also able to frustrate the other major point of the bourgeoisie's programme, a territorial settlement with the Palestinians. For the first fifteen years of its existence, Shas assumed a relatively moderate position with regard to the conflict, and was widely credited with helping to pass the Oslo Accords in the Knesset. But although this attitude reflected the political preferences of much of the party elite—most importantly its spiritual and political leaders, Ovadia Yosef and Arie Deri—it was almost diametrically opposed to the views of the vast majority of its voters, the most 'hawkish' sector of the Israeli public.<sup>20</sup> Since 1999, with the Oslo

<sup>18</sup> These results are not all comparable, because the 1996 and 1999 elections were conducted under the semi-presidential system, in which the prime minister was elected directly. This, paradoxically, benefited the small ideological parties at the expense of the larger catch-all ones.

<sup>19</sup> When Ehud Barak arrived in Tel Aviv's main square to celebrate his victory in the 1999 elections he was greeted by a frenzied mob of middle-class *ashkenazim* yelling, 'Anyone but Shas!'

<sup>20</sup> In an attitude survey of Jewish Israelis conducted at the beginning of 2002, 89 per cent of those indicating they would have voted Shas had an election been held on that day were opposed to a settlement with the Palestinians based on the 2000 Clinton plan, as against 60 per cent of all respondents. More than 60 per cent of Shas voters were in favour of the 'transfer' (expulsion) of non-citizen Palestinians,

process in crisis and with the economic conditions of its constituents continuing to deteriorate, the party's attitude towards the Palestinians has been aligned with that of its constituency.<sup>21</sup>

### *Culture wars*

The social stalemate of the Oslo period found vivid political expression in the relations between Shas and Meretz in Barak's coalition government of 1999–2001. In class, ethnic and ideological terms Meretz was a mirror image of Shas: the primary promoter of a territorial settlement with the Palestinians, it had a constituency of secular middle and upper-middle-class *ashkenazim*. Its origins lay in the merger of two political tendencies within Labour Zionism, one liberal and civil rights-oriented, the other nominally socialist and kibbutz-based. Despite its social-democratic rhetoric and the left-of-centre preferences of its voters, once in power Meretz ministers worked assiduously to privatize every public service they could lay their hands on—primarily the telecommunications and educational systems.

Though Meretz and Shas had both joined forces with the neoliberal Labourites in their 1994 takeover of the Histadrut, in Barak's 1999 coalition the two parties engaged in an interminable and futile struggle over the Ministry of Education's budget and jurisdiction over Shas's school system. Thus, during the final years of the Oslo process, the two most clearly class-based parties in Jewish Israeli society fought each other over issues of culture and identity politics. In June 2000 Meretz, which had ten Knesset seats at the time, was forced out of the government. A

compared to slightly less than 46 per cent of all respondents. *Mizrahim* supported 'transfer' at a somewhat higher rate of 48 per cent, and *ashkenazim*—around a half of whom are recent immigrants from the former USSR who tend to have strongly nationalist views—at a lower rate of about 42 per cent. More than 50 per cent of Shas voters, as compared to 30 per cent of all respondents, supported the 'transfer' of citizen Palestinians. See Asher Arian, *Israeli Public Opinion on National Security 2002*, Tel Aviv 2002; the Shas data do not appear in Arian's published report and were kindly supplied to me by one of his collaborators, Raphael Ventura. Michael Shalev and Gal Levy report similar findings about Shas voters' attitudes towards the Palestinians in their analysis of the 2003 elections, 'The Winners and Losers of 2003: Ideology, Social Structure and Political Change', in Asher Arian and Michal Shamir, eds, *The Elections in Israel: 2003*, Albany, NY, forthcoming.

<sup>21</sup> Sami Shalom Chetrit, *The Mizrahi Struggle in Israel: Between Oppression and Liberation, Identification and Alternative, 1948–2003*, Tel Aviv 2004, p. 263.

month later Shas, with its seventeen MKs, bolted out of the coalition on the eve of Barak's departure for Camp David, leaving him with a minority government as the Oslo process approached its denouement.

The collapse of the Camp David summit, and especially the Israeli and US governments' interpretation of it, reshuffled the cards in Israel's domestic politics and in Israeli–Palestinian relations. While pro-forma negotiations continued up to the very eve of the elections for prime minister in February 2001, the political atmosphere was no longer one of negotiation, but rather of war. In the political limbo that prevailed at the close of Barak's short term in office, Sharon stole a march with his highly publicized and militarized visit to the Temple Mount/Noble Sanctuary. The clear message it conveyed was that, whatever agreement might still be reached with the Palestinian leadership, different actors were now going to be calling the shots.

The Israeli and US governments had been warned by Palestinian officials about the likely consequences of Sharon's visit, and were asked by them to block it.<sup>22</sup> But Barak and his then Minister of Public Security Shlomo Ben-Ami did nothing to stop Sharon. When the predicted Palestinian reaction came, in the form of stormy demonstrations on the Temple Mount/Noble Sanctuary on Friday, 29 September, the police opened fire on the demonstrators, killing seven of them and wounding more than a hundred.<sup>23</sup> The signal for the outbreak of the second *intifada* had been lit.

The events of the next few days are crucial for understanding the dynamics of Sharon's rise to power and the transformation of Israeli and Palestinian societies that ensued. In a groundbreaking article in the mass circulation daily, *Maariv*, on the second anniversary of the *al-Aqsa intifada*, Ben Kaspit revealed that in the first days of the uprising the IDF fired one million bullets in the Occupied Territories—700,000 in the West Bank and 300,000 in Gaza—against largely unarmed demonstrators. As a result, the 'kill ratio' at the beginning of October 2000 was seventy-five dead Palestinians to four dead Israelis. According to Kaspit:

<sup>22</sup> Jeremy Pressman, 'Visions in Collision: What Happened at Camp David and Taba?', *International Security*, vol. 28, no. 2, Fall 2003, p. 28.

<sup>23</sup> *Report of the State Commission of Inquiry for Investigating the Clashes between the Security Forces and Israeli Citizens in October 2000* [the Or Commission], vol. 1, Jerusalem 2003, pp. 92–101.

In the Israel of 2001 it became clear, for those who did not already know it, that the military makes and implements policy . . . [It] determines the rhythm and gets the events rolling. The political echelon is totally incapable of checking the military or enforcing discipline on it. In those hard days, in September 2000, it finally turned out that Israel is not a state that has an army, but an army that has a state attached to it. The real executive branch is not the Cabinet, but the formidable security system that the state has surrounded itself with in the course of the years.<sup>24</sup>

In more measured terms, Yoram Peri, a prominent student of civil-military relations in Israel, concluded that 'the military is an equal partner in the policy process and is sometimes even more powerful than that'. Where Kaspit believes that the IDF was defying Barak's policy, Peri is more sceptical: whether through weakness or because he agreed with it, 'it is clear that Barak adopted the military's policy during much of that period'.<sup>25</sup>

During the first ten days of October another arm of the state-security apparatus, the national police force, was acting in essentially the same manner within Israel's pre-1967 borders, shooting dead twelve Palestinian Israeli citizens and one non-citizen Palestinian engaged in protest activities. (One Jewish motorist was also killed by citizen Palestinian demonstrators during the same period.) The state commission of inquiry Barak appointed to investigate these events, presided over by Supreme Court justice Theodore Or, delivered its unmistakable conclusion in 2003: the Israel Police, without government authorization, had acted as an independent agent, shooting unarmed demonstrators with rubber-coated bullets and live ammunition, in contravention of the law and of its own internal guidelines.

Whether the police intended it or not, in killing Arab-Israeli demonstrators they sealed Barak's fate and guaranteed Likud's election victory. For years the centre-right electoral block, composed of Likud and its allies, had enjoyed a slight advantage among Jewish voters. Labour could win an election only if supported by an overwhelming majority of Palestinian

<sup>24</sup> Ben Kaspit, 'Two Years of the Intifada', *Maariv*, 6 and 13 September 2002 supplements [Hebrew].

<sup>25</sup> Yoram Peri, 'The Israeli Military and Israel's Palestinian Policy: From Oslo to the Al Aqsa Intifada', Washington, DC 2002, pp. 13, 35; see also pp. 32–5. It should be noted that only a few months earlier, in May 2000, Barak was able to impose his will on the IDF and force it to withdraw from southern Lebanon.

Israeli citizens, as Barak was in 1999. The events of October 2000 resulted in massive abstention among Palestinian voters in the prime ministerial elections of February 2001. Why, then, did Barak do nothing to prevent actions that were to bring about his electoral downfall? Perhaps amid renewed Palestinian resistance and breakdown of the Oslo process, the military man in him trumped the politician.

### *Settlers and security forces*

The reasons for the ferocity with which the state-security apparatus lashed out at the Palestinians are not hard to decipher. Since the late 1980s, both the IDF and the police had been frustrated in their efforts to quell the growing restiveness of citizen and non-citizen Palestinians. Israel's failure to repress the first *intifada* (1987–93) did not stem, obviously, from the balance of military power between Israel and the Palestinians, but rather from the political limitations that the country's trade and economic policies imposed on the use of military force. The IDF, then under Barak as Chief of the General Staff, opposed the Oslo process, as it did the initial moves towards peace with Egypt in the late 1970s; even as Prime Minister, Barak did not hide his disdain for the Accords. On two occasions during the Oslo period, in 1996 and 2000, the IDF was again frustrated in its attempt to utilize its power effectively against Palestinian 'disorders'. The IDF's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000, meanwhile, took place against its publicly expressed misgivings.<sup>26</sup>

Underlying the frictions between the state-security apparatus and its elected officials was a growing antagonism on the part of the IDF and other security forces to the prospect of any form of withdrawal from the Occupied Territories. Since 1967 the IDF has been, *de facto* and *de jure*, the sovereign power in these territories, which have not been formally annexed to Israel to this day. In addition to intelligence and operational forces, managing the Territories and their millions of Palestinian residents requires a large civil affairs bureaucracy, sustained by huge budgets, where many military careers have been made. As we have seen, the turn

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<sup>26</sup> Pressman, 'Visions', pp. 27–8; Kaspit, 'Two Years'; Peri, 'Israeli Military', pp. 31–3, 50–1; *Or Commission Report*; Amos Harel, 'The IDF Will Not Withdraw Again in Defeat', *Haaretz*, 8 March 2004. Needless to say, the IDF high command is not made of one cloth, and many generals, in and out of uniform, have supported the peace process and, on occasion, even restrained bellicose civilian politicians. See Peri, 'Israeli Military', pp. 45–51.

to neoliberal policies had been accompanied by a substantial reduction in military spending relative to GNP, as well as the loss of military contracts and reduction of the standing army. During the Oslo period there was talk of abolishing the draft and turning to a professional force, and even of privatizing major military functions. Finally, the prestige of the military, and the motivation to serve in it, had experienced a marked decline during that period. Both have been restored since 2001.<sup>27</sup>

The other social sector that, along with the military, stood to lose the most from any withdrawal from the Occupied Territories were the settlers. Arguably, they too should be viewed as an arm of the state. The settlers have by and large been placed where they are by the state, on land forcibly expropriated from Palestinians and transferred to them for free, and with their housing and social services heavily subsidized. Their settlements have always been provided heavy security by the military, and a whole network of bypass roads has been built for their exclusive use. About 50 per cent of the settlers are employed directly by the state, and they constitute auxiliary military garrisons in their settlements, armed by the state. In the vast majority of cases, when the settlers have used these arms against Palestinian civilians at their own initiative, they have done so with impunity. Lastly, the torturous route of the separation wall currently being built by Israel in the West Bank was determined by the need to provide security for as many settlers as possible.

The IDF and the settlers have always had a symbiotic relationship, with the latter having a say in the appointment and dismissal of senior military officers, and many of them becoming senior officers themselves. It is a hotly debated question whether the IDF would actually remove the settlers if ordered to do so by the government. What is clear, however, is that throughout the Oslo period no effort was made to remove even one settlement, and the settler population actually doubled during that time. Still, as long as a declared policy of some eventual, partial withdrawal was being promoted by the Israeli bourgeoisie as part of its neoliberalization policy, the settlers and IDF were powerless to stop it. Only when the Oslo process had been checked by the opposition of Shas and the Jewish working class was the state able to abandon the project. What was

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<sup>27</sup> Yoram Peri, 'Civil–Military Relations in Israel in Crisis', in Daniel Maman, Eyal Ben-Ari and Zeev Rosenhek, eds, *Military, State, and Society in Israel*, New Brunswick, NJ 2001, pp. 107–36.

most important to the bourgeoisie, however—economic liberalization—was continued by the state, and with a vengeance unprecedented in the country's history.

As we have seen, the events of October 2000 guaranteed a Likud victory in the 2001 prime ministerial elections. Netanyahu declined to run, ostensibly on the grounds that he would not be able to govern with the Knesset returned in 1999. (A better explanation may be that he was wary of the social stalemate that had brought him down in 1999, which he had no idea how to break.) The way was thus open for Sharon, the only other politician of any stature in Likud. He owed his landslide victory primarily to an unprecedently low turnout of 62.3 per cent (compared to 78.8 per cent in 1999), comprised of 68 per cent of eligible Jewish voters and only 19 per cent of Palestinian ones. As noted above, many of the abstainers were potential Labour voters. Thus, Sharon received 62.4 per cent of votes cast, even though, in absolute terms, he received 100,000 fewer votes than Barak did in 1999.<sup>28</sup>

Sharon's electoral base in 2001 was Likud's traditional constituency—the less affluent, less educated, more *mizrahi*, younger and more religious section of the electorate.<sup>29</sup> Like the French peasants who voted for Louis Bonaparte, it was precisely these layers that would suffer most from the neoliberal policies Sharon's government would adopt. In spite of that, they would again vote for Likud and its allies in even greater numbers in 2003.

### *Savaging the welfare state*

Throughout the 1990s the Israeli economy experienced relatively high growth rates and a soaring increase in the inequality of income distribution. Between 1990 and 2002, the economic-income share of the top decile rose from 25 to 30 per cent, that of the second decile remained unchanged, while that of all others declined. The Gini coefficient rose from 0.498 in 1993 to 0.528 in 2002. Inequality of disposable income—which includes taxes and transfer payments, in addition to economic

<sup>28</sup> Asher Arian and Michal Shamir, eds, *The Elections in Israel—2001*, Albany, NY 2002, particularly the chapters by Shamir and Arian and by Jamal.

<sup>29</sup> Shamir and Arian, 'Abstaining and Voting in 2001', in Arian and Shamir, eds, *The Elections*, p. 22

income—was much more moderate, however, rising from 0.339 in 1993 to 0.357 in 2002.<sup>30</sup> As one commentator has put it:

The welfare state remained broadly unharmed by the liberalizing reforms that have been the leitmotif of Israel's political economy since the successful deflation of the mid-1980s... it is only in the new millennium that, against the backdrop of resurgence of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and a halt to economic growth, the Ministry of Finance and its supporters have gathered the political strength to undertake substantial welfare state retrenchment.<sup>31</sup>

The global recession and breakdown of the Oslo process plunged the Israeli economy into a serious slowdown. Israel's GDP decreased by 0.9 per cent in 2001 and 0.8 per cent in 2002, though a recovery of 1.3 per cent was registered in 2003. Per capita GDP decreased in all of these three years, by 3.2 per cent in 2001, 2.8 in 2002, and a moderate 0.5 in 2003.<sup>32</sup> The recession, coupled with a sharp increase in military spending due to the *intifada*, occasioned six rounds of budget cuts and structural economic changes between September 2001 and September 2003. In overall monetary terms, the state budget was cut by nearly 20 per cent. In broader political-economic terms, the cumulative effects of the fiscal austerity and structural changes were greatly detrimental to the interests of the working class. Levels of employment, wages, unionization, social services and retirement plans declined, while employers benefited greatly from increased labour 'flexibility' and lower wage-costs and taxes.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Shlomo Swirski and Etty Konor-Attias, *Social Report—2003*, Adva Centre, Tel Aviv [Hebrew], pp. 7, 13; Asher Arian, David Nachmias, Doron Navot and Danielle Shani, *Democracy in Israel: 2003 Follow Up Report*, Democracy Index Project, Jerusalem 2003 [Hebrew], p. 83. Changes in the Gini coefficient do not tell the whole story, of course, since it measures only wages and salaries, not capital gain income.

<sup>31</sup> Michael Shalev, 'Placing Class Politics in Context Why is Israel's Welfare State so Consensual?', presented at the conference 'Changing European Societies—the Role for Social Policy', Copenhagen, 13–15 November 2003, p. 20, n. 14. This is in sharp contrast with the conventional wisdom (shared by Shalev and the present writer) that prevailed until the current transformation began to become apparent. In his 1999 *Israel Affairs* article, Shalev had noted that 'the collectivist economy that was the historical legacy of Jewish settlement and Arab–Jewish conflict in the pre-state period is difficult to dismantle precisely because conflict and settlement continue to shape state commitments'. Instead, renewed conflict and settlement have been the very factors that have enabled the reshaping of the country's political economy and retrenchment of the welfare state.

<sup>32</sup> <http://trade.walla.co.il>, 16 March 2004.

<sup>33</sup> Between 1980 and 1996 the overall tax burden in Israel fell from 42.3 per cent to 37.3 per cent. The tax rate on corporate revenues fell from 61 per cent in 1984 to 36 per cent in 1996; see Ram, 'Promised Land', p. 234.

The second *intifada* indeed served as the backdrop to this reassertion of the liberalization drive, but the effects of the renewed conflict were mediated politically by Sharon's ability to neutralize Shas and the Jewish working class. When Shas cabinet ministers objected to Sharon's first proposed state budget, which incorporated severe cutbacks to the welfare state, Sharon—bolstered by his Likud–Labour coalition—unceremoniously dismissed them. Within days they were back, completely subdued, and voted for the budget. In his second government, established in 2003, Sharon left Shas out altogether and included its arch-rival, *Shinui*, an economically liberal and politically conservative (although militantly anti-clerical) middle-class party that was the great success of the 2003 elections, rising from six to fifteen Knesset seats.<sup>34</sup>

It was the marginalization and eventual exclusion of Shas that enabled the Sharon government to make its unique contribution to Israel's political economy—the retrenchment of the welfare state. Whereas workers', and increasingly the middle class's market-based income continued its secular decline in the Sharon era, cutbacks in transfer payments and social services were dramatically deepened. During Sharon's first full years in office, 2002 and 2003, old age allowances lost 10 per cent of their value, guaranteed income allowances, paid to the poorest of the poor, lost 20 per cent, and benefits to single-parent families lost 28 per cent. The universally paid child allowances lost an average of 20 per cent of their value for families with two children; insurance-based unemployment benefits lost 23 per cent. While unemployment rose from slightly over 8.5 per cent when Sharon took office to nearly 11 per cent in 2004, in 2003 only 23 per cent of the unemployed received benefits, compared to 39 per cent in 2001.<sup>35</sup>

Sharon's ability to ignore Shas and break the social stalemate stemmed directly from the fact that, unlike all his predecessors since 1992, he was no longer trying to cater to the bourgeoisie's interest in a peace settlement with the Palestinians. The attempt to juggle the two balls of peace negotiations and economic liberalization at the same time had been the undoing of his two immediate predecessors, Netanyahu and Barak. Sharon has

<sup>34</sup> *Shinui* was established specifically to fight Shas and represents secular middle-class *ashkenazim*, including many immigrants from the former USSR; see Shalev and Levy, 'Winners and Losers'.

<sup>35</sup> Ruth Sinai, 'More than 5 per cent increase in poverty', *Haaretz*, 11 May 2004; Bank Hapoalim, *Economic and Financial Survey*, 30 March 2004, p. 1 [both Hebrew].

played on Israeli society's fear of terror attacks, on its conviction that there was 'no partner for peace' and on his own military reputation to silence all meaningful opposition. He was aided by a change in the electoral law that enabled Likud to elect forty Knesset members. (By comparison, Barak, elected under the old system in 1999, had a power base of only twenty-six MKs.) This allowed Sharon to conduct both of his wars—against the Palestinians and against 90 per cent of Israeli society—in an unprecedentedly brutal manner. Moreover, the Bush administration's total backing for Sharon since September 11 has removed any *realpolitik* motivation to reach an accommodation with the Palestinians.

### *War dividends*

Nevertheless, given the substantial 'peace dividend' garnered by the Israeli bourgeoisie, and the economic crisis into which Israel had been plunged since the outbreak of renewed hostilities, the silence of that top decile of income earners—those whose share of a vastly increased social product rose from 25 to 30 per cent during the Oslo period—might seem puzzling. The enigma is solved, however, when we realize that, in return for the loss of any prospect of peace and for stagnating GDP, the Israeli bourgeoisie received from Sharon the fundamental restructuring of the economy that had previously eluded it. Marx's characterization of the French bourgeoisie, 'which every moment sacrificed its general class interests, that is, its political interests, to the narrowest and most sordid private interests', is highly appropriate here. The major distributional project undertaken by the state under Sharon explains the evaporation of the Israeli business class as a force in favour of a peace settlement.<sup>16</sup>

Sharon's inherently contradictory position with respect to the class power of the Israeli elite is captured in Marx's brilliant portrayal of Louis Bonaparte's predicament:

As the executive authority which has made itself an independent power, Bonaparte feels it to be his mission to safeguard 'bourgeois order'. But the strength of this bourgeois order lies in the middle class. He looks on himself, therefore, as the representative of the middle class and issues decrees in this sense. Nevertheless, he is somebody solely due to the fact

<sup>16</sup> In early 2004 Moody's rating service declared the economic policy of the present Israeli government to be the best in Israel's history <http://news.walla.co.il>, 15 March 2004.

that he has broken the political power of this middle class and daily breaks it anew. Consequently, he looks at himself as the adversary of the political and literary power of the middle class. But by protecting its material power, he generates its political power anew. The cause must accordingly be kept alive; but the effect, where it manifests itself, must be done away with.<sup>17</sup>

In the present case this contradiction is expressed in the fact that Sharon has found it necessary to have at least one political party that represents the *ashkenazi* elite in his coalition. So far he has always succeeded in finding a middle-class party opportunistic enough to join him—first Labour, then Shinui. To accommodate these parties he has had to appear to be constantly pursuing some sort of ‘peace plan’. As long as such schemes kept being supplied by the US—the Mitchell Plan, the Tenet Understanding, Bush’s Roadmap—he gladly embraced them, only to turn them into dead letters. In one case he adopted a Labour plan—the separation wall—which he skilfully adapted to his own purposes.

When the Americans, increasingly bogged down in Iraq, ran out of peace proposals, Sharon adopted, in modified form, another Labour idea: a unilateral withdrawal from Gaza. If taken seriously, this would mean the removal of all Jewish settlements there by the end of 2005; but the region would nonetheless remain surrounded on all sides by Israel’s military forces, isolated from the West Bank and the rest of the world, and surviving on the charity of UNRWA and other international organizations. Needless to say, Sharon does not conceive of this as a first step towards a broader peace settlement with the Palestinians, or even the resumption of negotiations. Since he raised this idea, Israel’s attacks on the Gaza Strip have become even bloodier, resulting in scores of Palestinian deaths, including those of the two top leaders of Hamas, and the utter devastation of Rafah. In the West Bank, meanwhile, settlement activity has intensified and the process of ghettoizing Palestinian communities through checkpoints, roadblocks, bypass roads and the separation wall has picked up speed.

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<sup>17</sup> Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire*, pp. 131–2. The Sharon government’s animosity towards the ‘literary power’ of the Israeli middle class is expressed in its attack on the universities, where a counter-hegemonic vision of society could potentially develop. Draconian budget cuts and forced structural changes, designed to weaken the autonomy of the faculty and strengthen the government’s hand in running these institutions, were decreed in 2003.

Sharon's real motive in proposing the 'withdrawal' from Gaza may have had something to do with the legal troubles he was facing at the time, and with the difficulties the US was, and still is, facing in Iraq. Allegations of corruption abounded around the make-up of Likud's electoral list for the 2003 general elections—including, for the first time in Israel's history, claims that safe seats on the list had been bought by elements associated with organized crime. Sharon himself, and his two sons, one of whom was elected to the Knesset in 2003, came under criminal investigation for a number of alleged illegalities, ranging from illicit campaign contributions to bribery. David Appel, a well-known real estate developer and Likud king maker, was indicted for bribing Sharon personally when he was Foreign Minister under Netanyahu, and the State Attorney (the chief prosecutor, whose position is just below that of Attorney General) recommended that the Prime Minister be indicted as well.<sup>38</sup> As it turned out, however, the Attorney General, appointed by Sharon's cabinet only a short time before, rejected the State Attorney's recommendation and even publicly doubted her motives in making it. While a number of other investigations are still under way, Sharon's immediate problems have been alleviated.

### *A sustainable formula?*

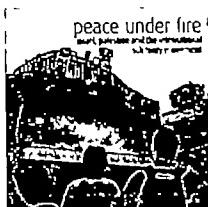
Sharon's political formula—bribing the bourgeoisie, feeding nationalist and militarist illusions to the Jewish working class, and pumping up Israeli fears of Palestinian terror—has so far paid off handsomely. But how viable can this be in the long run? According to Marx, the Bonapartist scheme is inherently unstable, since it is based on a social stalemate that cannot persist for long. In our particular case, having achieved its long sought-after economic restructuring, the Israeli bourgeoisie may become impatient with the sluggish economy that is almost ensured by Sharon's war of politicide, as well as with the general feeling of gloom that has pervaded Israeli society since 2001. The Jewish working class too may become restive as its standard of living continues to decline. (Likud was defeated quite badly in local elections held in 2003.) While

<sup>38</sup> If Sharon had been indicted Shinui, a party that has made much of its commitment to clean government, would have come under a lot of pressure to withdraw from his coalition. Sharon may have sought to safeguard his Knesset majority by bringing Labour back into his government with the Gaza plan, which Labour strongly supports.

dissent within the military has so far been insignificant, in the past—particularly during Sharon's 1982 invasion of Lebanon—it has reached a stage where it had to be taken into account in military and political calculations. It is not inconceivable that the increasing brutality and futility of the war on the Palestinians may affect the willingness of both draftees and reserve soldiers to serve in the military.

Despite these internal contradictions and tensions, however, Israel's current political-economic-military regime can probably be sustained as long as strong American support continues. The US can, if necessary, shore up the Israeli economy at a relatively low cost to itself, and US approval lends domestic legitimacy to the Israeli state and its policies. It is true, as Marx pointed out, that state power cannot be suspended in midair. Unlike 19th-century France, however, the Israeli state has an external leg it can lean on, in the form of the United States. It can therefore dispense more easily with the need to satisfy even in an illusory way the interests of either of Israel's major social classes. But this external prop has its costs. If it were ever to be removed—perhaps as a result of the worsening quagmire in Iraq—the fall could be very painful.

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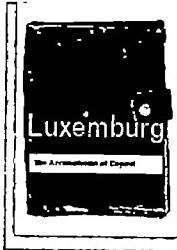
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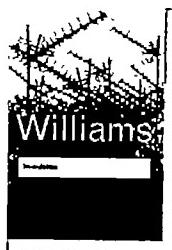
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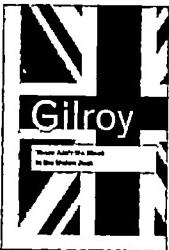
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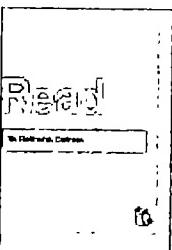
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## SHAPESHIFTER

### *Godard as Multimedia Installation Artist*

Jean-Luc Godard, at 73, is one of Europe's most prolific contemporary artists.<sup>1</sup> In the six years since the release of *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, his eight-part videographic history of cinema, and history of the twentieth century through cinema, he has gone on to produce an astonishing quantity of work in a variety of media, thus confounding those critics who thought his historical project some sort of testament. Much of this recent work has been made in collaboration with his long-standing companion, the photographer, filmmaker and writer Anne-Marie Miéville.<sup>2</sup> It includes four video essays, all closely related in formal conception while diverse in topic and tone: *The Old Place* (1999, co-directed by Miéville), a set of dialogic reflections on the state of art at the close of the twentieth century; *L'Origine du vingt et unième siècle* (2000), a chilling personal vision of the birth of the twenty-first century out of the slaughter and trauma of the twentieth; *Dans le noir du temps* (2002), a philosophical evocation of the last moments of youth, courage, thought, memory, love, silence, history, fear, eternity and cinema; and *Liberté et Patrie* (2002, co-dir. Miéville), a playful adaptation of Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz's 1910 novel *Aimé Pache, peintre vaudois*, in which the duo deploy Ramuz's fictional alter-ego, the painter Aimé Pache, to reflect on their own artistic trajectories and the Franco-Swiss dimension to their work.

In addition, Godard has published several books of 'phrases' derived from his audiovisual productions, reproduced in the form of continuous prose poems, together with a book-length transcription of his dialogue on cinema and history with Youssef Ishaghpoor, where he pursues many of the lines of thinking distilled into *Histoire(s) du cinéma*.<sup>3</sup> He has also made two feature films: a graphically arresting poetic meditation on wartime resistance, and artistic creation as resistance in the age of spectacle, *Éloge de l'amour* (2001); and an elegy on war, *Notre Musique* (2004), which brings together his now familiar found-footage collage practice with a fictional restaging of the European book salon organized annually since 2000 by the André Malraux Cultural Centre in Sarajevo, featuring the participation of writers such as Pierre Bergounioux, Mahmoud Darwish and Juan Goytisolo. Finally, he found the time to act in Miéville's *Après la réconciliation* (2000); to film and edit *Champ contre champ*, a contribution to a forthcoming collective cinematic portrait of Paris; and, perhaps most intriguingly, to prepare for his much-anticipated gallery installation, *Collages de France*, due to run at the Pompidou Centre for nine months from October 2005 to June 2006.

### 'Were cinema to disappear . . .'

Beside the unusually wide range of roles often assumed by Godard—entrepreneur, director, performer, scriptwriter, dialogist, editor and publicist—the most memorable qualities of his work are perhaps its poetic density, formal rigour and crystalline intensity. Equally striking, however, is the sheer variety of media in which he is now working and the ease with which he moves between them. 'Everything is cinema', as

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Michael Temple for his useful comments on a draft version of this essay, and Nicole Brenez for her practical help.

<sup>2</sup> Besides her extensive photographic and audiovisual output, Miéville has published several books, including *Histoire du garçon*, Lausanne 1994, a tribute to her late brother, Alain, comprising texts and photographs, and three volumes based on her film and video work: *Nous sommes tous encore ici: dialogues de film*, Paris 1997; *2x50 ans de cinéma français*, Paris 1998, co-authored with Godard; and *Après la réconciliation: scénario*, Paris 2000. Her latest book is a collection of short texts, *Images en parole*, Tours 2002.

<sup>3</sup> After publishing *JLG/JLG* and *For ever Mozart* in 1996, P.O.L went on to issue *Allemagne neuf zero* (1998), *Les Enfants jouent à la Russie* (1998), and *Éloge de l'amour* (2001) as books. First printed in *Trafic* in 1999, Godard's conversation with Ishaghpoor appeared in book form as *Archéologie du cinéma et mémoire du siècle: dialogue*, Tours 2000.

he is fond of saying. Or, as he put it in a singularly prescient account of his artistic practice in 1962:

As a critic, I thought of myself as a filmmaker. Today I still think of myself as a critic, and in a sense I am, more than ever before. Instead of writing criticism, I make a film, but the critical dimension is subsumed. I think of myself as an essayist, producing essays in novel form or novels in essay form: only instead of writing, I film them. Were the cinema to disappear, I would simply accept the inevitable and turn to television; were television to disappear, I would revert to pencil and paper. For there is a clear continuity between all forms of expression. It's all one. The important thing is to approach it from the side which suits you best.<sup>4</sup>

In the intervening period, as cinema has mutated, Godard has indeed gone on to experiment with different media, including television and the written word. While it is tempting to read the diversity of his output as a reflection of the fragmentation, dispersal and renewal of cinema as it encounters new media and finds fresh outlets, such as the internet or art gallery, identification of Godard with cinema has tended to obscure the individuality of his project, and the fact that he is as much a multi-media poet in the manner of Jean Cocteau as a feature-film director in the lineage of Hitchcock or Hawks.

*Histoire(s) du cinéma* provides a good starting point for rethinking Godard as a multimedia collage artist, partly because its use of video to process and blend film clips, photographs, paintings, cartoons, drawings, voice, sound, song, music and literary texts is the logical extension and most extreme manifestation to date of his long-standing exploration of the medium as a quasi-scientific tool for the dissection of existing representations. But *Histoire(s) du cinéma* is not only the title of the eight-part, four-and-a-half hour video series released by Gaumont in 1998; it also designates the four art books published the same year in Gallimard's prestigious Blanche collection, and the box set of audio CDs issued by ECM Records in 1999. In addition to these three principal articulations, and setting aside a completed but hitherto unreleased ninety-minute 'best of' compilation commissioned by Gaumont for theatrical distribution, *Le Moment choisi des Histoire(s) du cinéma*, the project has circulated

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<sup>4</sup> 'Jean-Luc Godard' (interview), *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 138, December 1962. In Jean-Luc Godard, *Godard on Godard*, trans. and ed. Tom Milne and Jean Narboni, London 1972, pp. 171–96.

in various forms: published working documents, drafts of the initial episodes (early versions of Chapters 1A and 1B were presented at Cannes in 1987 and broadcast in France in 1989), television broadcast of the whole series in France in 1999, and the voluminous critical discourse spun by Godard around the work in written texts, interviews and public appearances throughout the two decades of its gestation. These multiple forms of the project offer a set of key perspectives—video art, graphic art, sound art, and criticism—in which to reassess the specificity of Godard's work.

### *Exploring video*

A glance at a filmography is sufficient to complicate straightforward identification of Godard with cinema, at least in the sense of feature films shot on celluloid and projected in darkened theatres. In the past three decades, he has made nearly twice as many works on video as on film, not counting the thirty-two constituent episodes of his major video series: *Six fois deux (Sur et sous la communication)* (1976, co-dir. Miéville); *France/tour/détour/deux/enfants* (1979, co-dir. Miéville); and *Histoire(s) du cinéma*. The displacement of 16mm by video in the early 1970s as the privileged medium in his practice for essayistic experimentation produced a string of exploratory forms, from the preparatory sketchbook or 'video scenario' (*Scénario video de Sauve qui peut (la vie)*, 1979) to metacritical essay (*Scénario du film Passion*, 1982) and televisual anti-documentary (*Soft and Hard*, 1985, co-dir. Miéville). Two of Godard's most tautly composed stand-alone video pieces of the late 1980s, however, *On s'est tous défilé* (1988) and *Puissance de la parole* (1988), together with the initial drafts of Chapters 1A and 1B of *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, signalled a marked intensification of his creative investment in video, and in the corresponding rigour with which sound and image were treated videographically. Since then video has come to occupy a role as central and highly cherished as 35mm in his work, and all of his audiovisual output, irrespective of medium, holds its own whether projected, broadcast or scrutinized on video or DVD.

Given the technological transition from chemical via electronic to digital reproduction in the post-war period, it is perhaps less surprising that Godard should have explored the possibilities of video so extensively than that most filmmakers of his generation should have opted not to. Schooled through exposure to film history, Godard's career has unfolded

in close parallel with that of video: under development from 1950 (year of his earliest critical article); in commercial use from 1956 (date of his initial foray into fiction, *Une femme coquette*); on sale for domestic use since 1963 (launch date of the first Sony VCR, when he turned his sights on television for the first time in *Le Grand Escroc*); used for rapid recorded broadcast playback from 1967 (year of the introduction of the portable black and white Sony Portapak, when he toyed with the idea of using video as tool for auto-critical political analysis in *La Chinoise*); developed in U-Matic cassette form in 1969 (commercially available from 1971, distributed widely by Godard and his collaborators to political and workers' groups in the early 1970s, and central to his own practice from 1973); and as colour VHS from 1976 (the year of his and Miéville's first television series). The proliferation of domestic VCRs in the late 1970s and rapid spread of camcorder culture from 1982—reflected with interest in the saccadic motion of *France/tour/détour/deux/enfants* and *Sauve qui peut (la vie)* (1980), and with increasing contempt in works from *Prénom Carmen* (1983) to *Meetin' W. A.* (1986)—was accompanied by Godard's systematic accumulation of the raw materials for *Histoire(s) du cinéma*: the stacks of images culled from magazines and books, and the thousands of videotapes that constitute his personal videotheque and which are sampled so extensively in his work of the past two decades.

The tendency to divide the Godardian corpus into successive discrete periods—the New Wave, the political work, the video years, and so on—emphasizes discontinuity over the sense of a developing artistic project. In my view, the œuvre falls into two major movements and pivots on the encounter with video: from the post-war discovery of cinema and the early New Wave, via the neo-Brechtian critique of the society of the spectacle, to the political dead-end of the early 1970s; and from 1973—the start of the exploration of video technology, collaboration with Miéville, development of a resolutely subjective project, and reinvention of the simplicity and directness of early cinema—to the present.

Video and autobiography are central to the two founding Godard–Miéville projects, whose forms and concerns underpin much of their subsequent work. *Moi Je* (1973), a long-cherished but ultimately abandoned combination of self-analysis and study of human beings as political machines, announces the strong autobiographical dimension of Godard's later work, and lays the ground for his recurrent self-depiction in image and sound from *Numéro deux* (1975) to *The Old Place. Ici et ailleurs*, their

first completed project (finished 1974, first distributed 1976), is a devastating indictment of the preceding Groupe Dziga Vertov militant films and, more broadly, of the projection by Western intellectuals of their revolutionary zeal onto distant political struggles at the expense of their immediate environment and the reality of their daily lives. The fruit of an extended dialogue—according to Miéville, they worked on editing the film every day for eighteen months—it remains one of the formal and intellectual peaks of their collaboration.<sup>5</sup> As the first of their films to blend film and video, and combine autobiography and the composition of audiovisual history through the conjugation of pre-existing footage and freshly-shot material, it is also the blueprint, corner stone, and in a sense the first chapter, of *Histoire(s) du cinéma*.

### *Glue and scissors*

While the books of *Histoire(s) du cinéma* represent the most visible manifestation to date of Godard's production as a graphic artist, this facet of his project dates back to the 1960s. Although most of the working documents relating to his early films are lost, the fragments that survive—preparatory notebooks, shooting scripts, and outlines of unrealized projects—reveal remarkable consistency with ensuing decades. The similarity between the *Histoire(s) du cinéma* books and his 1965 *Journal d'une femme mariée*, for instance, a volume composed from frame enlargements and fragments of speech from *Une femme mariée* (1964), is particularly striking, especially in the use of layout to articulate a dialogue between image and text.<sup>6</sup> The difference is less one of means and method than of rationale: where *Journal d'une femme mariée* sought to distil the narrative of the source film into portable graphic form, the composite imagery and image–text relationships of *Histoire(s) du cinéma* articulate historical thought—temporal connections frozen momentarily on the page—through superimposition and the rapprochement of image and text.

The artistic director of Gallimard Jacques Maillot, who worked closely with Godard on the production of the *Histoire(s) du cinéma* books, was particularly struck by the latter's rejection of a conventional template to

<sup>5</sup> ‘Un entretien avec la réalisatrice: “Il faut parler de ce que l'on connaît”’, interview with Miéville by Danièle Heyman, *Le Monde*, 18 January 1989.

<sup>6</sup> Godard and Macha Méril, *Journal d'une femme mariée*, Paris 1965. Published in English, although with a different layout, as Godard, *The Married Woman*, New York 1965.

guide the placement of image and text in favour of artisanal composition by eye.<sup>7</sup> Godard stuck the various elements by hand onto the blank sheets exactly where he wanted them, so as to establish a precise network of connections on each double page, and a unique rhythm across each volume. It is in relation to the sculptural physicality of this glue-and-scissors work as a graphic artist—the title of a six-page collage by Godard published in *Cahiers du cinéma* in December 1987 is, precisely, ‘Colle et Ciseaux’—as much as in his work as a conceptual collage artist and hands-on film and video editor, that his deployment in and around *Histoire(s) du cinéma* of Denis de Rougemont’s maxim ‘to think with one’s hands’ is best appreciated.

At the end of the 1960s, as part of an exploration of modes of expression untainted by what he was starting to decry as the tyranny of the word, Godard attended regular drawing lessons over a six-month period with Gérard Fromanger, an experience that fed directly into the storyboards of *Moi Je* and *Comment ça va?* (1976, co-dir. Miéville), and use of the video pen in *Six fois deux*.<sup>8</sup> But the turning point in Godard’s activities as a graphic artist coincides with that in his audiovisual work and resulted from his acquisition in the early 1970s of an ostensibly banal piece of equipment: a good quality photocopier.<sup>9</sup> Cherished by Godard alongside his new video and telecine equipment, the photocopier was put to use as a creative tool for thinking and composing quickly and cheaply in images, and led to the production of three large-scale collage works at the end of the decade, each of which merit full consideration alongside his audiovisual work. ‘The Story’ (1979, sometimes also referred to as ‘Bugsy’ or ‘The Picture’), was ostensibly work in progress for a forthcoming film, but is perhaps better considered, like Chris Marker’s ‘L’Amérique rêve’ (1959), a finished piece imagined and expressed through the arrangement of text and image.

The special issue of *Cahiers du cinéma* that Godard guest-edited in 1979, a work not dissimilar in conception to Jean Epstein’s 1921 collection of poetic tracts *Bonjour cinéma*, includes, alongside numerous smaller

<sup>7</sup> Jacques Maillot, “Je ne connais pas de travail comparable sur un livre”, *Le Monde*, 8 October 1998.

<sup>8</sup> Gérard Fromanger, ‘Il faut créer un Vietnam dans chaque musée du monde’, in Nicole Brenez and Christian Lebrat, eds, *Jeune, dure et pure! Une histoire du cinéma d'avant-garde et expérimental en France*, Paris/Milan 2001, pp. 336–8.

<sup>9</sup> Godard, *Introduction à une véritable histoire du cinéma*, Paris 1980, p. 277.

collages, his and Miéville's substantial report on their abandoned venture with the government of Mozambique, 'Naissance (de l'image) d'une nation' (1977–79). Finally, there is the transcription of his film history lectures at the Conservatoire d'Art Cinématographique in Montreal, *Introduction à une véritable histoire du cinéma* (1980), which constitutes a kind of extended exploratory scenario for *Histoire(s) du cinéma* and is illustrated by over sixty pages of images selected, reframed and juxtaposed by Godard.<sup>10</sup>

From this time to the present—a recent example is his evocation of *Notre Musique* in *Libération*, in May 2004, via a commentary on selected press photographs in preference to a conventional interview—he has gone on to produce a large and varied body of graphic collage work that is best considered an expression of cinema, in the expanded Eisensteinian sense of creative thought through montage, in materials other than celluloid.<sup>11</sup> Much of this is showcased in the two volumes of *Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard* edited by Alain Bergala, and might be loosely categorized as follows: production documents; self-contained poems, such as the seven-page 'Deuxième lettre à Freddy Buache: Oh temps de l'utopie!' (1998), which is presented in explicitly filmic terms as a 'métrage cinématographique'; scenarios, usually conceived in part, like their video counterparts, with a view to securing production funds ('Passion: Introduction à un scénario', 1981); and works such as the unpublished image-text book derived from *2x50 ans de cinéma français* (1995) which, like the *Histoire(s) du cinéma* volumes, extends and opens new perspectives on the source work.

### *Sound art*

Godard's approach to sound recording and mixing has been characterized throughout his career by the openness to experimentation of the amateur and the precision of the professional. Ironically, the pervasiveness of the impact of his sound work on others has made it difficult to pin down and easy to forget. In 1962, at the time of the release of *Vivre sa vie*,

<sup>10</sup> A selection of twenty-four pages from 'The Story' is available in Godard, *Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard*, ed. Alain Bergala, Paris 1985, pp. 418–41; Godard, ed., *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 300, May 1979; Chris Marker, 'L'Amérique rêve', in *Commentaires*, Paris 1961, pp. 88–121; Jean Epstein, *Bonjour cinéma*, Paris 1921; Godard, *Introduction à une véritable histoire du cinéma*.

<sup>11</sup> Godard and Gérard Lefort, 'Regardez voir, Godard', *Libération*, 12 May 2004.

Jean Collet published an enthusiastic review of the film's soundtrack, emphasizing the ambition and novelty of a film shot entirely on location using synchronized sound, with noise and voice recorded directly onto a single track at the moment of filming. Ten years later, when his article was republished in English, he noted that much of what he had written had become virtually meaningless, so completely had Godard's innovations been absorbed into mainstream film and television practice.<sup>12</sup> By refusing the classical primacy of dialogue, and placing voice, noise, music and ambient sound on an equal footing, Godard's exploration of the expressive possibilities of the soundtrack with engineers such as Guy Villette (responsible for *Vivre sa vie*), René Levert, Antoine Bonfanti and Jacques Maumont was as fruitful as that of any other filmmaker in the 1960s.

His subsequent political interrogation of sound–image relations with the Groupe Dziga Vertov from 1968 to 1972 would have an enduring impact on his later practice: his new camera, as he suggested the following decade in his role as Uncle Jean in *Prénom Carmen*, was a ghetto blaster. Since the end of the 1970s, music has played an increasingly central role for Godard: inspiring images, guiding the creative act, and—as in *Prénom Carmen*, where the Prat Quartet's rehearsals of Beethoven's late string quartets repeatedly reinvigorate the faltering B-movie plot—driving forward narrative. Subsequent experiments in stereo sound collage such as *Détective* (1985), *Soigne ta droite* (1987) and *King Lear* (1987)—all products of Godard's collaboration with François Musy, the engineer responsible, alone or with Pierre-Alain Besse and a handful of others, for the sound of virtually all of his work since 1982—cleared the way for his ongoing collaboration with Manfred Eicher and ECM Records.

In 1990, midway between the release of a collective musical tribute to Godard in recognition of his contribution as a sound artist, *Godard ça vous chante?* (1985), and that of the digitally remixed soundtracks on CD of *Nouvelle Vague* (1997) and *Histoire(s) du cinéma* by ECM, Thierry Jousse argued persuasively that Godard's work was henceforth more profitably considered through reference to contemporary music and musicians than to cinema and other filmmakers—a line of thinking later pursued by various specialist music critics, including the panel that awarded

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<sup>12</sup> Jean Collet, 'An Audacious Experiment: The Sound Track of *Vivre sa vie*', in Royal Brown, ed., *Focus on Godard*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 1972, pp. 160–2. Originally published in *La Revue du son*, no. 116, December 1962, p. 513.

the *Histoire(s) du cinéma* CDs the German Record Critics' Special Jury Prize in 2000.<sup>13</sup>

Since returning to art cinema in 1980 with 'a film composed by Jean-Luc Godard', *Sauve qui peut (la vie)*, Godard has worked increasingly in the manner of a musician, as much in his general approach to audiovisual composition as in his actual orchestration of sound, music, voice and noise. His manipulation of video as a quasi-musical instrument to be played at the mixing desk, as he once put it to Jonathan Rosenbaum, has been accompanied by an exploration of neo-musical form—inspired in equal measure by Dziga Vertov's experiments in symphonic film composition, by the French narrative avant-garde of the 1920s and by the novels of Broch, Faulkner and Woolf—that has culminated to date in *Éloge de l'amour*.<sup>14</sup> Asked by a disbelieving Laure Adler on *Le Cercle de minuit* in 1996 whether he was seriously suggesting that his recent work could be experienced equally well with one's eyes closed, 'yes', Godard replied, 'it's possible'.

This idea is not as odd as it might sound: the concept of imageless cinema has been with us since the early sound period, from Walter Ruttmann's 'sound film without images', *Weekend* (1930), a remarkable experiment in what would come to be known as *musique concrète*, to promotional records for early Godard features such as the one for *Une femme est une femme* (1961), which combines extensive commentary by Godard with excerpts from the soundtrack, and has recently been made available once more on the DVD of the film released in the Criterion Collection. But in the age of DVD, which has ushered in the possibility of listening to films at home in high-quality digital stereo, with or without the image-track, Godard has charted the parameters of sound cinema, in the dual sense of sound-image relationships and self-contained imageless soundscapes, as boldly and thoroughly as anyone.

Cultivating a familiarity with Godard and Godard-Miéville's later work through sound on CD or DVD is one of the most accessible and

<sup>13</sup> Thierry Jousse, 'Godard à l'oreille', *Cahiers du cinéma*, 'Spécial Godard. 30 ans depuis', supplement to no. 437, November 1990. For further discussion of this topic, see the chapters by Laurent Jullier, Roland-François Lack, Adrian Martin and James Williams in the section entitled 'Sound and Music' in Michael Temple, James Williams and Michael Witt, eds, *For Ever Godard*, London 2004.

<sup>14</sup> See Jonathan Rosenbaum, 'Trailer for Godard's *Histoire(s) du cinéma*', in Godard, *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, Munich 1999, vol. 4, pp. 165–81.

immediately rewarding ways of engaging emotionally and intellectually with its at times forbidding density. Not everything is of equal sonic complexity or interest: conversation pieces such as *2x50 ans de cinéma français* and *The Old Place* are less aurally rich or seductive than essayistic compositions such as *JLG/JLG: Autoportrait de décembre* (1995) and *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, or fictional soundscapes such as *Nouvelle Vague* and *Éloge de l'amour*. At the mixing desk, Godard is free to indulge his love of the timbre of the human voice, and to pursue his long-standing exploration of rhythm, counterpoint and overlap, and of the dialogue or confrontation—at times playful, at others dramatic—between the sounds carried on the respective stereo tracks.

What is so striking in the more intensely worked pieces is the coherence of the polyphonic aural universes produced through the sampling and orchestration of such varied sources. The effect of *Nouvelle Vague* or *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, for instance, is anything but dissonant or cacophonous. Indeed among the most notable characteristics of Godard's later work is a use of music, from *Le Dernier Mot* (1988) onwards, to facilitate slippage between present and past, and the rapprochement of ostensibly incompatible sounds to bridge disparate worlds: the cry of a gull that launches a symphonic movement, dissolution of David Darling's cello into the blare of a car horn, or punctuation of Giya Kancheli's *Abii ne viderem* by a medley of voices. Furthermore, in a historical perspective, beyond the reflection on the documentary value of the cinematic image in the videos and books of *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, the CDs redirect the debate firmly onto film sound: what, they ask, of the historical charge of the sounds contained in the countless soundtracks that are an equal part of cinema's legacy? Not just the sociological or linguistic interest of song and speech, but the historical detail caught in the everyday sounds of the countryside and city, home and workplace, recorded on disc, tape or film, especially since the commercialization of synchronized sound. And could one not imagine, asks Godard, alongside informational and pedagogical materials made up of still or moving archive imagery, sonic history 'books' composed of archive sounds?

### *Criticism and performance*

Throughout his career, Godard has pursued a multifaceted critical project with equal intensity in his audiovisual work, writings, interviews and other interventions in the media—one directed as much towards

his own work as that of others, to the state of cinema and to the era he inhabits, often all at the same time. He continues to give public support to collective interventions in the realm of cinema (protest at the apparent censorship of Michel Khleifi and Eyal Sivan's *Route 181: Fragments of a Journey in Palestine-Israel* at the 2004 Cinéma du Réel festival in Paris), domestic French politics (support for the movement spearheaded by filmmakers in 1997 in opposition to the proposed tightening of immigration legislation, the 'Debré law'), and international conflict (backing for the protest mounted by André Glucksmann and Romain Goupil in 2000 against the Russian war in Chechnya).<sup>15</sup>

It is tempting to complement Serge Daney's description of Godard as 'over-gifted critic' with Robert/Godard's lament in Miéville's *Après la réconciliation*—'maybe I've spoken too much'—especially when considering the tension between the vitality of his audiovisual forms and the bleakness of his accompanying critical discourse, and indeed the general mismatch between what he says and the evidence of the work.<sup>16</sup> In a technological perspective, for instance, Godard's ostensibly reactionary condemnations of digital media are of far less interest or significance than the asynchronous relationship between his use of technology and the period he inhabits. Godard has always used existing technologies to theorize emerging media: his fragmentary 35mm features of the 1960s, steeped from the outset in the forms and codes of broadcast television, are also lessons in what truly imaginative and joyfully insolent television might look like; his 16mm essays such as *Caméra oeil* (1967) might be seen as proto-video graphic models of video as image-sound synthesizer; and late collage works such as *Histoire(s) du cinéma* can be considered exploratory video graphic voyages into cinema's digital future. Indeed Godard's project in its entirety can be viewed as an attempt to foresee and confront post-war technological change, and the human and social implications of such change, and to reinvent cinema in the face of successive challenges: from television (the New Wave and after); from deregulated neo-television and domestic video culture (the video graphic research, experimental television and video-inflected art cinema of the

<sup>15</sup> 'Une censure inadmissible à Cinéma du Réel', *Libération*, 8 March 2004; Patrice Chéreau, Jean-Luc Godard, Anne-Marie Miéville and Stanislas Norday, 'Sans-papiers: avant qu'il ne soit trop tard', *Le Monde*, 13 May 1998; 'Grozny rasée, corps torturés, peuple écrasé . . . Une horreur hante l'Europe', *Le Monde*, 23 March 2000.

<sup>16</sup> Serge Daney, *L'Exercice a été profitable, Monsieur*, Paris 1993, p. 56.

1980s); and from digital technology (the ongoing investigation into the theory and practice of audiovisual history).

The mountain of interviews given by Godard over the years can be divided into three broad categories: those in which he is in marketing mode, those where he is pursuing a genuine critical dialogue, and the majority, which fall somewhere in between, where he is promoting a film and thinking out loud about works in progress and future projects. As scores of professional interviewers have found to their cost, however, the description ‘interviewee’ is generally a misnomer when applied to Godard. In a discussion of his physical omnipresence in and around his work, Jacques Aumont once suggested that Godard had effectively donated his body to cinema in the way that others might donate theirs to science.<sup>17</sup>

The almost burlesque theatricality of his presence in television interviews indicates an acute awareness of his iconic status ('I am an image') and ability to stage a persona more or less on demand in response to the environment in which he finds himself. One of the most highly stylized examples of this process of self-*mise en scène* took place at the 1998 Césars ceremony, where, in accepting an award on behalf of the New Wave, he eschewed the conventional acceptance speech to enact the role of humble sponsored artist, and deliver a litany of thanks before the assembled film dignitaries: to the young filmmakers who had resisted the Debré law and helped maintain his faith in cinema; to the individuals whose support had allowed him to start and finish *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (Pierre Lescure and André Rousselet at Canal Plus, and Nicolas Seydoux at Gaumont respectively); and to Alain Sarde, for his long-standing collaboration as producer.

In fact, his television appearances are often closer to performance art than interviews: caustic semi-improvised stand-up comedy routines combined with interrogation of the institutional norms, and *détournement* of the flow of information, of which he is temporarily a part. Towards the close of a live lunchtime TV broadcast presented by Yves Mourousi on TF1 in 1985, for example, on which Godard appeared alongside Myriem Roussel, star of his then new release, *Je vous salue, Marie* (1985), he

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<sup>17</sup> Jacques Aumont, ‘La valeur-cinéma’, in Sergio Toffetti, ed., *Jean-Luc Godard: un hommage du Centre Culturel Français et du Museo Nazionale del Cinema de Turin*, Turin 1990, pp. 19–28.

literally took control of direction of the studio cameras to deliver a brief lesson in the art of framing. Similarly, his critique of the use of slow motion by Santiago Álvarez in *79 primaveras* (*79 Springtimes*, 1969) and Stanley Kubrick in *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), delivered in his Rolle studio for the benefit of those making a special issue of *Cinéma Cinémas* devoted to his work in 1987, is as eloquent an audiovisual lesson in Godardian montage theory as that pursued anywhere in his work since *Ici et ailleurs*.

### *Installation art*

The most productive model for rethinking the disparate forms of Godard and Godard–Miéville's multimedia activity derives from the conjunction of fine art and experimental cinema: installation art. As Catherine Grant has recently suggested, the totality of their output—CDs, videos, films, books, interviews and other forms of public intervention—is best considered a kind of giant installation under constant construction and in ongoing dialogue with its audience.<sup>18</sup> In this context, André Malraux's notion of the museum without walls, beyond its inspirational role in the conception of *Histoire(s) du cinéma* as portable biblio-disco-videotheque for the preservation of traces of cinema, provides a concise description of Godard and Miéville's conceptualization of the public sphere as a vast open gallery in which to stage their project through the mass media and other more rarefied cultural forms. At a time when their unique mode of expanded cinema, besides being projected in darkened theatres, can be encountered on television and CD, in books, magazines and newspapers, and re-viewed on video and DVD, this social installation model has the benefit of allowing for their totally open conception of cinema, and of recognizing each new work as discrete and addressed to a more or less distinct audience, while simultaneously a constituent part of a much larger integrated multi-form work in progress under continual development on multiple fronts. In this perspective, the proposed *Collages de France* project is less a new departure than a subset, and the extension through new means, of an all-encompassing macro-installation, and so quite distinct from other forays into the gallery by major contemporary artist-filmmakers such as Chantal Akerman, Atom Egoyan, Chris Marker and Jonas Mekas.

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<sup>18</sup> Catherine Grant, 'Home-Movies: The Curious Cinematic Collaboration of Anne-Marie Miéville and Jean-Luc Godard', in Temple, Williams and Witt, *For Ever Godard*, pp. 100–17; p. 419, fn. 62

There are three main consequences stemming from this reconceptualization of Godard as multimedia poet, and of his (and his and Miéville's) project in terms of installation art. Firstly, in diachronic terms, it accords equal weight to all manifestations of the project, irrespective of budget or format; foregrounds the profoundly experimental dimension to the work; and renders redundant any meaningful distinction between research, work in progress, or finished artwork. Secondly, in a synchronic perspective, it emphasizes the integrated nature of the project by revealing a network of interrelated works at varying stages of development, all in close conversation with the socio-political context. And thirdly, by recognizing the multifaceted nature of the work, it invites a fresh approach to exhibition, one that would be as receptive to the traditions of the happening, concert, gallery and museum as to the logic of the familiar film retrospective.

Thus a Godard retrospective today would need to pay balanced attention to the multiple forms of the work, to include glimpses of the changing world that it evokes and confronts, and to convey a sense of its formal dialogue with other poets, painters, writers, musicians and filmmakers. In conceiving such an event, one might seek inspiration in Henri Langlois's legendary cinema museum, or in the many exhibitions that he staged: for example, the 1945 touring '*Images du cinéma français*' event, an eclectic mix of film extracts running continuously on loops in a darkened room, production documents, film stills, and assorted artefacts such as the wax model of Micheline Presle's head used in Marcel L'Herbier's *La Nuit fantastique* (1942).<sup>19</sup> Looking to more recent examples, one might take a cue from the 'Hitchcock et l'art: coïncidences fatales' and 'Jean Cocteau, sur le fil du siècle' exhibitions mounted by Dominique Paini at the Pompidou Centre in 2001 and 2003–4 respectively, which, in a manner highly sympathetic to the interdisciplinary vision of cinema expressed in *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, invited the visitor to

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<sup>19</sup> For a rich evocation of the conception and contents of Langlois's museum, see Huguette Marquand Ferreux, ed., *Musée du cinéma Henri Langlois*, Paris 1991. The '*Images du cinéma français*' event is discussed in Richard Roud, *A Passion for Films: Henri Langlois and the Cinémathèque Française*, London 1983, pp. 60–1 and, alongside various other Langlois exhibitions, in Georges Langlois and Glenn Myrent, *Henri Langlois: premier citoyen du cinéma*, Paris 1986, pp. 151–74. See also Nicole Vedrès's magnificent visual history of French cinema, a key precursor to the *Histoire(s) du cinéma* books, which appeared in the summer of 1945, some months after the exhibition had left Paris: *Images du cinéma français*, Paris 1945.

negotiate a vast three-dimensional collage of working documents, film clips, drawings and paintings installed in the gallery space.<sup>20</sup>

*Collages de France*—which has been described by Paini, who commissioned the project, as a cross between lecture series, installation, film production and reality television—promises to extend this collage-based logic far beyond the walls of the gallery, not least through the relay of live imagery into the Pompidou Centre from Godard's Rolle studio.<sup>21</sup> Early indications suggest that the format of this nine-month season, a co-production between the Pompidou Centre and the Fresnoy national centre for contemporary art in Tourcoing, will draw as much on Godard's prior exploration of non-normative pedagogical situations in the various 'anti-lectures' he has delivered over the years in locations such as Montreal (1978–9), Rotterdam (1981) and Sarajevo (2002), as on his audiovisual collage practice. The rolling programme of monthly 'episodes' or 'chapters' is conceived around the confrontation of three principal elements: archive imagery; live broadcast; and dialogues between Godard and a range of writers, philosophers, scientists, filmmakers and artists on the state of the world and its representation.

In this latter respect, *Collages de France* represents the latest in a long line of Godardian initiatives aimed at fostering collaborative reflection and work—regular association with key personnel in the 1960s, the establishment of filmmaking collectives at the end of the decade (the Groupe Dziga Vertov) and in the 1970s (Sonimage), and failed attempts in the 1990s to forge working relationships with institutions such as the national film school (the Fémis) and the Théâtre National de Strasbourg—as the basis for the generation of fresh forms. His ultimate aim, as he suggested in a short presentation of the project in May 2004, is to explore through practice some of the qualities discovered but forgotten by cinema, notably its unique ability to forge revelatory connections between disparate elements and generate thought through montage.<sup>22</sup> Whether this next experimental stage in Godard's project will inspire

<sup>20</sup> A trace of these exhibitions is retained in the respective catalogues: Guy Cogeval and Dominique Paini, eds, *Hitchcock et l'art: coincidences fatales*, Montreal 2000; François Nemer, ed., *Jean Cocteau*, Paris 2003. See also Paini's reflections on his experiments in *Le Temps exposé. le cinéma de la salle au musée*, Paris 2002.

<sup>21</sup> Jean-Michel Frodon, 'Dominique Paini, une saison avec Godard', *Le Monde*, 8 April 2003.

<sup>22</sup> Godard, 'Collages de France', *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 590, May 2004.

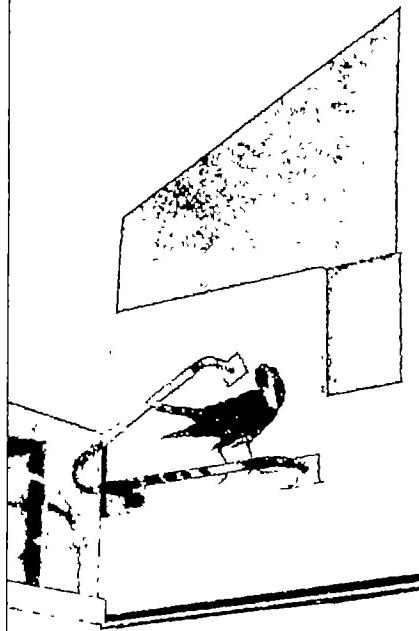
curators and programmers to find new ways of exhibiting his back catalogue, or indeed to pursue an imaginative exploration of cinema history in the gallery more generally, remains to be seen. What already looks almost inevitable, however, is that, like *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, it will provoke another great wave of pressing questions regarding the nature and role of cinema in the future.

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*Previous articles in this series have been Tony Wood on the cinema of Aleksei German (NLR 7), Silvana Silvestri on Gianni Amelio (NLR 10), Leo Chanjen Chen on Edward Yang (NLR 11) and David Murphy on Ousmane Sembene (NLR 16).*

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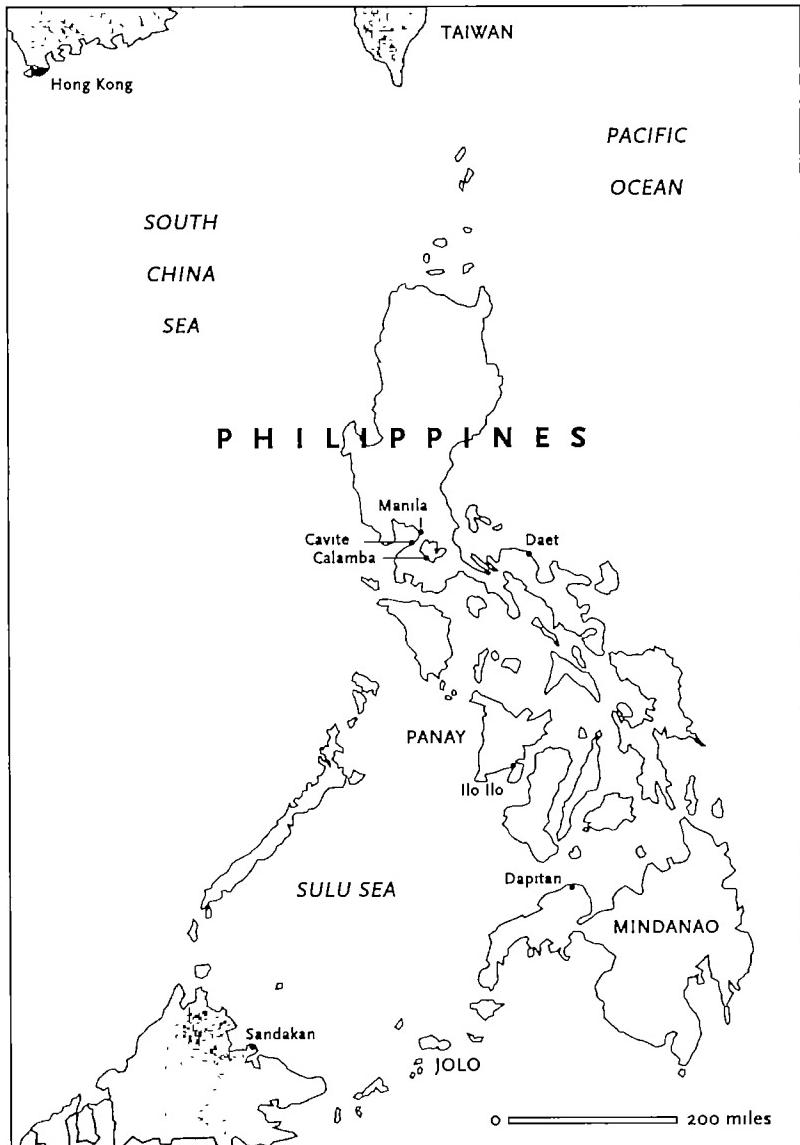
## JUPITER HILL

*José Rizal: Paris, Havana, Barcelona, Berlin—3*

*Parts i and ii of this triptych (NLR 27 and 28) explored the complex transnational contexts, literary and political, that shaped the incendiary anticolonial novels (*Noli Me Tangere*, 1887, and *El Filibusterismo*, 1891) of the Philippines' 'founding father' José Rizal. Part iii considers how developments in Cuba, Europe, and the Far East framed his final years—and how, after Rizal's execution, his nationalist contemporary Isabelo de los Reyes smuggled back to the American-colonized Philippines what he had learned from anarchist cellmates in the dungeons of Barcelona.<sup>1</sup>*

HAVING PACKED OFF virtually the entire edition of *El Filibusterismo* to his trusted friend José Basa in Hong Kong and wound up his remaining affairs, Rizal left Europe on October 19, 1891. Except for a single sombre day, he would never set foot on it again. The timing was well chosen. The notorious Valeriano Weyler's four-year term as Spanish Captain-General of the Philippines would end within a month. His successor, General Eulogio Despujol, was thought to be much less ferocious.

Rizal's family had repeatedly warned him not to come back to the Philippines—with good reason. His 1887 *Noli Me Tangere* had been a brilliant, blistering attack on clerical cruelty and corruption. On a brief visit home after its publication he received 'daily threats' from agents of his well-placed enemies, and could barely leave his father's house in Calamba. Worse, he had urged the local tenants and townspeople to take the rent-racking Dominicans to court. The vengeful Order won the case and Captain-General Weyler had ordered that the recalcitrant Calambans' houses be torched. Copies of *El Filibusterismo*, whose plot centred on a (failed) attempt to blow up an unnamed (but clearly



identifiable) Captain-General and incite an insurrection, would soon fall into the hands of the authorities.

His family urged him instead to settle in Hong Kong, only 800 miles from Manila, where they might hope to join him. By the end of 1891 they had been happily reunited in the Crown Colony, where the young novelist opened a successful ophthalmological practice. But his reputation as his country's foremost intellectual leader and the terms on which he had left Europe made it difficult for him long to accede to his family's wishes. He was besieged with letters from his more radical comrades asking him what he would do 'next', and promising their full support, whatever 'next' turned out to be.

*Chto dyelat?*<sup>1</sup> One alternative emerges in photographic negative in a letter from the Austrian ethnographer Ferdinand Blumentritt, dated January 30, 1892:

Above all, I beg you not to get involved in revolutionary agitation! For he who stages a revolution should at the least have before him the likelihood of success, if he does not wish to have his conscience burdened with useless bloodshed. Whenever a people has rebelled against another people dominating it, or a colony against the Motherland, the Revolution has never succeeded solely on the basis of its own strength. The American Union became free because France, Spain and the Netherlands allied with it. The Spanish republics became free because civil war raged in the Motherland, and England and North America provided money and guns. The Greeks became free because England, France and Russia offered their support. The Rumanians, Serbs and Bulgarians were liberated by Russia. The Italians were liberated thanks to France and Prussia, and the Belgians thanks to England and France. Everywhere, those peoples who relied 'solely' on their own strength were crushed by the soldiery of Legitimacy: the Italians in 1830, 1848 and 1849; the Poles in 1831, 1845 and 1863, the Hungarians in 1848 and 1849, and the Cretans in 1868.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See 'Nitroglycerine in the Pomegranate', NLR 27, May–June 2004, and 'In the World-Shadow of Bismarck and Nobel', NLR 28, July–August 2004. The three essays form part of a larger book on the subject, to be published by Verso next year. I would like to express my gratitude to Neil Garcia, Carol Hau, Fouad Makki, and above all Ambeth Ocampo for their help with information, criticism, and bibliographical references. Errors in what follows are entirely my own responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> *Cartas entre Rizal y El Profesor Fernando Blumentritt, 1890–1896*, Manila 1961, pp. 783–4.

Blumentritt went on to say that no revolution of this kind has any chance of success unless: 1) parts of the enemy's army and navy mutiny; 2) the Motherland undergoes civil war or external attack; 3) money and weapons have been prepared well beforehand; 4) a foreign power officially or secretly supports the insurrection. 'Not one of these conditions is met in the Philippines [today].'

On the other hand, Rizal's energetic friend Edilberto Evangelista—later a hero of the Philippines' 1896 insurrection against Spain—wrote from Ghent:

Why don't you try at least to find out the number of those who accept your ideas and are on fire with the same élan; what I mean is that it is essential to give form to your ideas by organizing, in defiance of the Government, a Revolutionary Club, which you could direct from Hongkong or any other place. Isn't this what the Cuban separatists have done? And Spain's Progressives?<sup>3</sup>

The Cuban example was crucial. Rizal's first plan for resolving these contradictory pressures was to form a settlement for his family and like-minded friends on the bay of Sandakan, in what is today the East Malaysian federal state of Sabah. Geographically, it was close to the Philippines—250 miles from Jolo, seat of the once-powerful Muslim sultanate of Sulu, still restive under loose Spanish overlordship; and a little over 600 from Manila. (The same distances separated Havana from Miami and from Tampa, where Martí was recruiting revolutionaries among the Cuban tobacco-worker communities.) Politically, too, it could seem promising: the district was governed by a private business, the British North Borneo Chartered Company, which was eager to settle the area and accepted that the Filipino community would be run by its own members. Some of Rizal's more fiery comrades in Europe, perhaps dreaming Tampa dreams, were enthusiastic about the planned settlement. It also promised an unbadgered life for his family, for the dispossessed of Calamba and for Rizal himself—now starting, in Tagalog, his third, unfinished novel

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<sup>3</sup> *Cartas entre Rizal y sus colegas de la Propaganda, 1889–1896*, Manila 1961, p. 800. Letter of April 29, 1892. Martí had founded his Cuban Revolutionary Party in the us that January. The Spanish reference is probably to followers of Manuel Ruiz Zorrilla. See John Schumacher, S. J., *The Propaganda Movement, 1880–1895*, rev ed., Manila 1997, pp. 46, 55, 202.

*Makamisa*.<sup>4</sup> But within a few months the whole project started to collapse. Rizal realized that he could not raise anything close to the money needed, and the new Captain-General of the Philippines, Despujol, was unwilling to grant permission for the necessary emigration, no doubt fearing that the 'real plan' was indeed a Bornean Tampa, just out of his political and military reach.

### A *Filipino politics*?

Rizal's alternative, more alarming for his family, was to create the first real political organization for Filipinos in the Philippines itself. (In this regard, his country was far behind Spanish Cuba, where political parties, even leftwing associations, and a lively, various press had been legal, within definite limits, for some years.) What this plan amounted to is difficult to determine, as virtually all the written evidence comes from testimony extracted by police interrogators after the outbreak of the Revolution in 1896.<sup>5</sup> The Liga Filipina's avowed aims seem quite compatible with Rizal's political ideas and his astringent way of expressing them. Point One, 'the union of the entire archipelago into a compact, vigorous and homogeneous body', not only implied that the archipelago was currently nothing of the sort but also that colonial law would have to be changed to eliminate the privileges of peninsulars, creoles and *mestizos*. Points Two and Three, 'mutual protection in every exigency and need' and 'defence against all violence and injustice', suggested that the regime, if not the source of violence and injustice, was at the least unwilling to take firm action against them. Points Four and Five, 'development of education, agriculture and commerce' and 'the study and applications of reforms', sounded as if they were emanating from the state—a state, in any case—not a simple civic institution.

If the Liga's programme went to the very bounds of existing colonial-Philippine legality, its internal organization (on this admittedly dubious evidence) seems designed for partial clandestinity. A structure of local

<sup>4</sup> What little there is of it has been carefully reconstructed by Ambeth Ocampo in his *The Search for Rizal's Third Novel, Makamisa*, Manila 1993. The title means 'After Mass'.

<sup>5</sup> See León Ma. Guerrero, *The First Filipino, A Biography of José Rizal*, Manila 1987, pp. 315–6. Guerrero refers to W.E. Retana's early *Vida y Escritos del Dr. José Rizal*, Madrid 1907, as his main source, and Retana relied almost entirely on the police reports.

councils was proposed, their heads meeting at the provincial level, and provincial leaders then creating a supreme body with power of command over the entire Liga. Yet each member was bound to 'obey blindly and to the letter' all commands from the Liga's higher authorities, and to keep its deeds and decisions 'absolutely secret from outsiders', even at the cost of his own life. In all this, the blurry lineaments of Evangelista's hoped-for Revolutionary Club, as well as the secretive traditions of political Masonry, are quite evident.

And then? Here the comparison with Martí, contemplating his own return home at almost the same time, is illuminating. Martí was a first generation Creole—his father from Valencia, his mother from Tenerife—whose native language was Spanish.<sup>6</sup> Most of his adult life was spent in Mexico and the United States; in the broad, old sense of the word, he was an *americano*, with wide-ranging contacts throughout the double continent. An orator, poet and brilliant publicist, he had extensive experience of political organizing, and could build on Cuba's insurrections in previous decades. He had no illusions about what would happen to him if he returned 'legally' to Cuba. And as a result of the 10-year-long Céspedes-initiated insurrection of 1868–78, and its short aftermath, the Guerra Chiquita of 1879–80, there were thousands of battle-hardened veterans, with long experience in guerrilla warfare, available for renewed armed struggle.

Rizal was a *mestizo*, partly *indio*, partly Chinese and partly Spanish, whose native language was not Castilian. Although also a skilled publicist, he was above all an astonishing novelist. His adult formation took place in Western Europe; beneficial as it was in so many ways, it cost him what Martí had in abundance—practical political experience. The region in which his country was located was almost entirely colonial: the British in India, Burma, Malaya, Singapore, and to a shady degree in northern Borneo; the French in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos; the Dutch in the East Indies; and only Siam formally independent. For him there was no close-by *point d'appui*, unlike Martí's vast republican New World. The Philippines had its own tradition of local rural insurrections and creole mutinies, but they were mostly long gone. In the early 1890s, there were no Catholic Filipinos with any experience of modern guerrilla warfare.

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<sup>6</sup> Hugh Thomas, *Cuba, The Pursuit of Freedom*, New York 1971, ch. xxv.

By the late spring of 1892, Rizal's choices were quite limited. Sandakan felt more and more like an illusion. Hong Kong was a haven only so long as the British tolerated him—and they had no interest in upsetting colonial Manila. To remain faithful to his commitments and to all those who regarded him as national leader, he had, it appeared, only one road to travel—back home. An additional spur must have come from a spiteful attack on him published in the Madrid-based journal *La Solidaridad*, run by the leading Filipino reformer Marcelo Del Pilar and his associates. Here Rizal was mocked as 'Iluso the First', a vain demagogue who gathers around him a following of imbeciles, innocents and fanatics and calls on them to rise up against their oppressors. When a voice in his audience wonders how this is possible without arms, ships and money, the mountebank replies:

Wretch, what are you saying? What are your objections? Money? We don't need it. A sword and a stout heart—that is the secret . . . Do you need supplies? They will rain down from Heaven, which aids good causes, and if they don't, then fast! Arms? Buy them! Military organization? Do-it-yourselves! Ships? Swim! Transportation? Carry your baggage on your own shoulders! Clothing? Go naked. Quarters? Sleep on the ground. Doctors? Die, as is the duty of all patriots!

The ragged, unarmed crowds head off to attack the oppressors, but Iluso the First is not among them: 'He had already proved his patriotism by his perorations'. Seated 'on the Olympus of his grandiosities', he explains: 'I am reserved for higher things. I am the Only Prophet; the only one who loves his country as she deserves is I'. For a man such as Rizal, steeped in Spanish and Tagalog conceptions of honour, there was only one way to give the lie to such calumny. He would return to the Philippines—openly, unarmed, and unaccompanied by any but his family.

### *Homecoming and arrest*

Knowing full well what he was risking, Rizal embarked for Manila on June 21, 1892. He had just turned thirty-one. He left behind two sealed letters, with instructions that they be opened and published in the event of his death. One was addressed to his family and the other to 'the Filipinos'. Both were intended to explain why he had decided to make

<sup>7</sup> 'Redentores de Perro Chico' ['Tuppenny Redeemers'], *La Solidaridad*, 15 April 1892, pp. 685–7. The anonymous author was the vain, wealthy creole Eduardo de Lete.

the perilous journey back to the Philippines. His actions, he wrote, had brought much suffering to the innocent, members of his family and fellow-townspeople above all, who had been harshly persecuted on his account. He would not change the course he had taken, but wished to take responsibility for it by facing the authorities in person, in the hope that they would henceforth spare all their other victims. The second letter, a strange mixture of patriotic pathos and personal bitterness, provides a wider vision of his purpose:

I also want to show those who deny [our capacity for] patriotism that we know how to die for our duty and for our convictions. What does death matter if one dies for what one loves, for one's country and those beings whom one reveres? . . . there remain others who can take my place, who are taking my place to advantage; furthermore, there are perhaps some who regard me as superfluous and see no need for my services, since they reduce me to inactivity. I have always loved my poor country and I am sure I shall love her to the last moment, if men should prove unjust to me . . . Be my fate what it may, I shall die blessing her and yearning for the dawn of her redemption.<sup>8</sup>

A third letter, carried on the same boat that was taking Rizal back to Manila, was addressed to Captain-General Despujol. It stated that he was returning to settle some personal affairs, and appealed to Despujol to stop the persecution of the Rizal family. He was fully prepared to answer any charges himself. He landed in Manila on Sunday, June 26, and was granted a short interview with his correspondent that very evening. The general immediately 'pardoned' Rizal's father, and told him to call again in three days time.

There is something very remarkable about this, at least seen in comparative perspective. Here was a young colonial subject who nine months earlier had published a novel in which an anonymous Captain-General, along with the top colonial elite, had come within a hair of being Nobeled to smithereens.<sup>9</sup> Nor was Rizal's arrival unexpected; the Spanish consul in Hong Kong had warned Manila by telegraph. One has to tip one's hat to the sang-froid of both the young novelist and the grey-haired

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<sup>8</sup> *Cartas entre Rizal y Sus Colegas de la Propaganda. 1889-1896*, pp. 831-2.

<sup>9</sup> The regime had already seized a consignment of *El Filibusterismo* that José Basa had tried to smuggle copies through the small port of Ilo-Ilo on the island of Panay. Most copies were immediately burned. Austin Coates, *Rizal, Philippine Nationalist and Martyr*, Manila 1992, p. 217.

general. It is quite impossible to imagine a comparable encounter anywhere in the British, French, Dutch or Portuguese empires—or even in Spanish Cuba. A guess or two: the first, Despujol was too busy to read the novel, or was not a novel-reader; the second, warmer: he knew a novel when he saw it.<sup>10</sup>

Then events moved with great speed. The next day, Monday, Rizal travelled north on the newly opened railway, stopping at various towns: his name was on everyone's lips, and his arrival in Manila already known. Despujol received him again on Wednesday and Thursday, granting Rizal's sisters permission to return home from Hong Kong. The discussions were mainly about the Sandakan project, which Rizal insisted was still in the works, and which the general strongly opposed. A further interview was scheduled for Sunday, July 3, 1892. That same day, Rizal formally launched the Liga Filipina in the private home of a wealthy political supporter. Among those in attendance was Andrés Bonifacio, a young artisan and commercial agent who would launch the Revolution four years later. Rizal himself seems to have done no more than outline the Liga's objectives, explain why the focus of political struggle had to move from Spain to the Philippines, and ask for various kinds of support.

Meantime, police agents had been shadowing Rizal, and were on standby to search all the houses he had visited. On Tuesday morning, the planned raids took place, though they turned up only copies of Rizal's novels, Masonic tracts, anti-friar pamphlets and so on—nothing that would have been punishable in Spain itself. On Wednesday Rizal saw Despujol for the fifth time in a week, to assure him that he was ready to return to Hong Kong. But the general now asked him to explain the presence of anti-friar handbills—including a lampoon of Leo XIII—in his luggage. Rizal replied that this was impossible. His sisters had packed for him, and would never have done anything so stupid, especially without his knowledge. Despujol then put him under arrest and confined him, with all courtesies, to Fort Santiago. The next day the novelist was handed an order for internal exile at Dapitan, a tiny settlement on the northwest shore of the remote southern island of Mindanao. What had happened?

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<sup>10</sup> Ambeth Ocampo has suggested to me that the unusually courteous treatment Rizal received may have been the result of Masonic brotherhood. Rizal himself was a Mason, as were many senior Spanish generals of Despujol's post-Isabella generation.

It is virtually certain that the handbills were forgeries designed to compel the colonial regime to deal decisively with the *filibustero* who had, in the Calamba affair, 'dragged' the domineering Dominicans up to the highest court in Spain. It is also virtually certain that Despujol knew or suspected that this was the case. Still, the leaflets came in handy. What really worried him was something else. In the first place, Tampa East. Rizal had repeatedly assured him that he was serious about the Sandakan settlement and that, if allowed to return to Hong Kong, he would continue working on it. Despujol knew very well what Madrid and the conservative Spanish press would think if the project were even minimally realized. On the other hand, if the youngster were allowed to move freely in and around Manila, the enthusiasm his reputation aroused could result in 'disturbances' among the subject people, or in Rizal's assassination at the hand of his *colon* and/or clerical enemies. The logic of the situation said clearly: keep the fellow inside the Philippines, but out of harm's way; and also treat him in such a manner that he will not become a martyr, especially in the metropolitan press.

### *Battlefield Cuba*

Meanwhile, on the other side of the globe, Martí's revolutionary party-in-exile was preparing for war. Cuba had changed dramatically over the preceding two decades. (No comparable developments had taken place in the Philippines.) The Ten Year War had ended with a political compromise, the 1878 Pact of Zanjón, whereby the Cuban rebels laid down their arms in exchange for amnesty and reforms—relative freedom of assembly and press, plus administrative rationalization. A massive, largely peasant and proletarian immigration from the peninsula after Zanjón brought new strains of Spanish (especially Catalan) anarchism and Marxism to Cuba. Crucially, Madrid also now moved to end slavery on the island. During his decade-long uprising Céspedes, who had freed his own slaves on the day he proclaimed the Republic, had largely controlled the broken, cattle-ranching country of Eastern Cuba, where slaves were relatively few. But he had been unable to make a decisive onslaught on Western Cuba, site of the colonial capital, which was dominated by wealthy sugar-plantations with huge slave populations. The phasing out of slavery and the economic blows inflicted on the 'plantocracy' by the 1880s depression and overseas competition made it possible for Martí to recast the revolutionary enterprise in a nationalist style which transcended (or appeared to) the discourse of race. White and black Cuban

males would, metaphorically at least, embrace each other as equals in the fight against imperial rule.<sup>11</sup> Rizal-style 'general nationalism' thus spread rapidly in almost all sectors. These changes in turn made it possible for the revolutionaries of 1895—Martí, Maceo and Máximo Gómez, the other five-star hero of 1868–78, who slipped into the island in April that year—to break successfully through the East–West line.

Their arrival had been anticipated by Madrid. Prime Minister Cánovas, back in power, persuaded Arsenio Martínez Campos, architect of the negotiated end of the Ten Years War, to return to Cuba as Captain-General. As early as June 1895, despite the fact that Martí had been killed in action the previous month, Martínez Campos described without illusions the new realities:

The few Spaniards in the island alone proclaim themselves as such . . . the rest . . . hate Spain . . . We could concentrate the families of the countryside in the towns, but much force would be needed to compel them, since already there are very few in the interior who want to be [Spanish] volunteers . . . the misery and hunger would be terrible . . . I lack the qualities to carry through such a policy. Among the present generals only Weyler has the necessary capacity, since only he combines the requisite intelligence, courage, and knowledge of war. Reflect, my dear friend, and if after discussion you approve the policy I have described, do not delay in recalling me. We are gambling with the destiny of Spain; but I retain certain beliefs and they are superior to everything. They forbid me to carry out summary executions and similar acts. Even if we win in the field and suppress the rebels, since the country wishes neither to have an amnesty for our enemies nor an extermination of them, my loyal and sincere opinion is that, *with reforms or without reforms*, before twelve years we shall have another war.<sup>12</sup>

The seasoned Captain-General, thinking long-term, recognized that the imperial cause was lost. Reforms would be useless against the nationalist tide; military victory would mean colossal suffering, and would not prevent a further war in the next decade. It is probable that Cánovas understood the message, but he was also convinced that the fall of Cuba would not merely drive him from power and almost certainly destroy the 'cacique democracy' that he and Sagasta had constructed in Spain over the past generation; it would also, by reducing Spain to a minor

<sup>11</sup> See Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation and Revolution, 1868–1898*, Chapel Hill, NC 1999.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Thomas, *Cuba*, pp. 320–1.

European state, be a devastating blow to national pride. Accordingly, he announced that Spanish Cuba would be defended 'to the last man and the last peseta', and dispatched Weyler to Havana. In short order, approximately 200,000 Spanish troops were shipped to the Caribbean island, at that time the largest military force ever conveyed across the Atlantic.

Weyler fully lived up to Cánovas's expectations. With his steely Prussian efficiency he turned the military tide in the course of 1896. In December, Maceo and Máximo Gómez's son 'Pancho' were killed in battle, and the bereaved father was largely on the run. The costs were enormous. Between 1895 and 1899, Cuba's population declined from around 1,800,000 to 1,500,000. Most of the casualties of the island-wide concentration camp were children who died of malnutrition and diseases parasitic thereon. Paraguay was the only country in the nineteenth century to suffer a greater loss of population.<sup>13</sup> Naturally, the economy was ruined. But the deeper problem was that neither Cánovas nor Weyler had any plausible political solution to hand. As we shall shortly see, this impasse would be resolved by a wandering Italian lad, only a few years out of his teens.

### *Escape to Havana?*

Recognizing that he was likely to be exiled in tiny Dapitan for a long time, Rizal had settled in soon after his arrival there in July 1892. He built himself a simple thatched house on stilts by the shore of the still beautiful, serene bay; then opened a medical practice and a little school for local boys, interested himself in agriculture and botany, and read whatever his relatives and friends were permitted to send in. By 1895, however, the insurrection in Cuba was changing the whole context of politics in the Philippines. Blumentritt's 'preconditions' were starting to be realized. In November, while Martínez Campos still ruled in Havana, Rizal—at the prompting of Blumentritt, but still with marked hesitation—sent a letter to Despujol's successor as Captain-General, Ramón Blanco, asking

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<sup>13</sup> Thomas, *Cuba*, pp. 328, 423. On the eve of the war it declared against Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay in 1865, Paraguay had a population of 1,337,439, mostly Guaraní, souls. When the war ended in 1870 this had been reduced to 28,746 adult males, 106,254 women over the age of 15, and 86,079 children, a total of 221,079. The losses amounted to 1,115,320, or 83 per cent of the population. Paraguay's three enemies also lost a million lives. See Byron Farwell, ed., *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth Century Land Warfare*, New York 2001.

permission to offer his medical services to casualties in Cuba.<sup>14</sup> For Blumentritt, the main thing was to get the exile out of the Philippines. The route to Havana lay through Spain; once there, Rizal could stay on safely under the protection of influential friends and political allies.

Rizal's own motives are much less clear, and here one can only speculate. Rizal knew Martínez Campos as the unsanguinary architect of the Pact of Zanjón. A doctor himself, he took seriously the Hippocratic duty to tend to the wounded, no matter what side they were on. He was quite familiar with 'advanced' Cuba's political history, up to the point of his departure from Europe. But what was newly insurrectionary Cuba like now? What could be learned from it? How had it faced off imperial Spain? For months, however, there was no reaction from the capital, although Blanco had promptly sent Rizal's letter on to Madrid with his personal stamp of approval. Meanwhile, in the Caribbean, Weyler and *weylerismo* had replaced Martínez Campos and Zanjón.

The news from Cuba also galvanized the more ardent elements of the former Liga Filipina. It was not simply a matter of Martí's example and the initial successes of the rebels, but also of the obvious difficulties Madrid would face in dealing simultaneously with two anti-colonial insurrections at opposite sides of the world. There was other seemingly favourable news, and from much closer at hand. In 1895, following Tokyo's easy military victory over Peking, Taiwan had been ceded to the Pacific's new rising power by the Treaty of Shimonoseki. The southmost tip of the island lay only 250 miles north of Luzon. A small group of activists had met secretly in Manila at the time of Rizal's deportation to Dapitan, to form a clandestine revolutionary organization which they called the Kataastaasang Kagalanggalang Katipunan nang manga Anak nang Bayan.<sup>15</sup> Its leader, Andrés Bonifacio, was then twenty-nine.

<sup>14</sup> In turn Blumentritt had been 'coached' by Antonio Regidor, the successful creole lawyer in London, who had excellent contacts in the Madrid elite, and knew how hard the War Ministry was finding it to recruit doctors for the yellow-fever devastated Spanish troops in Cuba.

<sup>15</sup> 'Most Illustrious, Respectable League of the Sons-and-Daughters of the People', where Katipunan formed a legitimizing semantic link to the defunct Liga. There were quite a number of women in the Katipunan, organized in their own chapters. Bonifacio's second wife, Gregoria de Jesús, who was 18 when he married her in 1892, became a well-known revolutionary in her own right.

The Katipunan does not seem to have done very much before the start of 1896, when its membership was still below three hundred. But Cuban successes now encouraged an energetic expansion of its membership.<sup>16</sup> At a meeting of the top leadership in May 1896 it was decided that an armed uprising was feasible, that soundings be made with regard to possible Japanese support, and that an emissary be sent to Dapitan to get Rizal's endorsement. (Without his knowledge, he had been made the Katipunan's Honorary President, and its speeches would customarily end with a rousing: 'Long live the Philippines! Long live Liberty! Long live Dr Rizal!') At the end of the month, one of the group, Dr. Pio Valenzuela, went to Mindanao on the pretext of bringing a blind servant of his for Rizal to treat. But the famous novelist's response was flatly negative. Nothing would come of the planned uprising but suffering for the Filipino people. Bonifacio was at first disbelieving of Valenzuela's report, then furious; but such was Rizal's prestige that the two men agreed to conceal from their Katipunan comrades what had really happened.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, nothing came of, or was done about, an approach to the Japanese.

Then, out of the blue, Blanco received a letter on July 1, 1896, from the Minister of War in Madrid, saying that, since Weyler had raised no objection to Rizal coming to Cuba to work as a doctor, he should be permitted to depart for the Caribbean. The Captain-General's official missive to Rizal arrived in Dapitan on July 30. The following day Rizal left for Manila on the same boat that had brought Blanco's letter, though not without a good deal of soul-searching; but after four years of isolation, he wanted to be free. At this point, however, his luck ran out.

Just a few weeks earlier, on June 7, 1896, a huge bomb had exploded during the annual Corpus Christi procession in Barcelona. Six people were killed instantly, and others subsequently died in hospital.<sup>18</sup> Martial law was declared in the city the following day. The police, egged on by the Church, various right-wing groups and their press, ran riot, arresting

<sup>16</sup> Some enthusiasts reckoned this at 10,000 by August 1896. Doubtless the network of Masonic lodges afforded some cover. See, for a succinct account, Teodoro Agoncillo, *A Short History of the Philippines*, New York 1969, pp. 77-81.

<sup>17</sup> Guerrero, *The First Filipino*, pp. 381-3.

<sup>18</sup> Police sources claimed that the *attentat* was aimed at the clerical and military dignitaries at the head of the procession, but was bungled, killing instead people at the rear.

about 300 people: anarchists of all types, anticlericals, radical republicans, progressive intellectuals and journalists. Most of them were imprisoned in the gloomy fortress of Montjuich, which would soon become notorious all over Europe for the tortures practised in its dungeons.<sup>19</sup> Spanish Cuba was already effectively under martial law; now it was Barcelona's turn; and the Philippines would shortly follow. Domestic repression, the most severe in Western Europe, as well as growing awareness of Weyler's grim methods in Havana, polarized metropolitan politics. Cánovas was admired or hated for both, and among his many enemies fury over Montjuich bled quickly into firmer sympathy for Cuba.

Rizal left Dapitan for Manila on July 31, 1896, expecting to catch the official monthly mailboat to Spain. But his ship ran into difficulties, and by the time it reached the Philippine capital on August 6, the mailboat was gone. Pending the departure of the next, he was kept on board at the Cavite shipyard, but otherwise treated well. At his own request, no one was permitted to have personal contact with him except for his family. This suggests that he was sufficiently alarmed by Pio Valenzuela's visit to worry not only that the Katipunan might do something foolhardy, but that his name would be invoked without his consent; if this happened, then he once again would have on his conscience the suffering of those victimized by a hopeless uprising. This does not mean that he had any real idea of what was transpiring in Manila, let alone Cuba, Madrid and Barcelona. What is extremely unlikely is that he understood what was clear to Bonifacio—that with 200,000 Spanish troops tied down in Cuba, Madrid did not have the capacity to send an overwhelming military force to the Philippines. Blumentritt's hour for a successful liberation struggle appeared on the rebel horizon.

### *Katipunan* insurrection

From late 1895, Captain-General Blanco had been receiving reports from his secret agents that an underground, revolutionary Katipunan was becoming active. The political strategy that he decided to follow was to avoid arousing paranoia and hysteria among the local Spanish

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<sup>19</sup> The origin of this curious name is contested. The more likely explanation is that it is a corruption of the Latin *mons jovis* (Jove's Mount or Hill). The steep, high escarpment overlooking the city was an appropriate site for sacrifices to the Romans' *capo di tutti capi*. But some Catalans believe that it refers to an old Jewish cemetery on the site.

by very quietly 'rolling up' the conspiratorial network. In mid-July 1896 his agents discovered a membership list of one Katipunan branch. Many of those on the list were secretly arrested, and either imprisoned or deported to remote islands. A fair number started to talk, so that Blanco was confident that his strategy would allow him to liquidate the conspiracy without the public being aware of anything. But then on August 19, *El Español* published a sensational story by a parish priest who said he had discovered in the confessional that a revolutionary uprising was about to take place. The Spanish community went into an angry panic. Blanco was now forced to order large-scale public raids and searches, while, to his fury, the Orders began claiming that only their patriotic vigilance had prevented a massacre; that the clueless Captain-General had done nothing.<sup>20</sup> Bonifacio, on the run, issued orders for a general meeting of the Katipuneros to decide what to do. It took place on August 23, in Pugadlawin, a village not far from colonial Manila. The gathering agreed to begin the insurrection six days later, with those present tearing up their *cédulas* (tax-payment receipts required to be carried by all natives as a form of ID) and shouting 'Long live the Philippines! Long live the Katipunan!' Neighbouring provinces were called on to rise and converge on the colonial capital at the same time.<sup>21</sup>

On August 29, 1896, Bonifacio led an assault on the arsenal in the Manilan suburb of Marikina. Two days later the poorly armed rebels took the province of Cavite, and the other provinces surrounding Manila were soon in *insurrecto* hands. Blanco found himself in a difficult position. The panicked Spaniards in the colony (about 15,000, including women and children, in an estimated population of about 7 million), and even more the powerful Orders, demanded immediate and violent repression. To a large extent, and perhaps against his own better judgement, (the colonial military was very small, and he had to cable Madrid for reinforcements),

<sup>20</sup> See the lucid account in Onofre Corpuz, *The Roots of the Filipino Nation*, Quezon City 1989, vol. 2, pp. 217–9.

<sup>21</sup> See the vivid account given in Teodoro Agoncillo's opinionated but groundbreaking *The Revolt of the Masses*, Quezon City 1956, chapter 9. This 'cry' has gone down in nationalist history as the Grito of Balintawak, though it occurred in Pugadlawin. The terminology is clearly a reference to the Grito de Yara, the popular phrase for Céspedes's proclamation of insurrection on October 10, 1868. It is probable that the locution was invented much later than August 1896, but at this moment the Philippines was indeed '28 years behind' Cuba, two years later, they would become close contemporaries.

Blanco yielded.<sup>22</sup> Hundreds of Filipinos were arrested and 'rebel' property seized. Death by firing squad was ordained for all those found by military courts to have helped Bonifacio's men. But to the rage of the colonial elite, Blanco followed Martínez Campos's earlier Cuban policy by immediately offering full amnesty to any rebel who surrendered promptly. At the end of October 1896, Archbishop Nozaleda cabled the Dominican HQ in Madrid: 'Situation worsens. Rebellion spreading. Blanco's apathy inexplicable. To avert danger, appointment new leader urgently necessary.' Less than six weeks later Blanco was recalled.<sup>23</sup>

And Rizal? Isolated in his roomy cabin on the waters of Cavite, and largely ignorant of what was going on around Manila, he had been waiting for the mailboat's scheduled departure for Spain on September 3, 1896. When he did learn more, he does not seem to have seen any reason to change the stand he had taken with Valenzuela three months earlier. He still believed any uprising would be a bloody failure. He was also intelligent enough to see that the rebels might use his name for their own purposes, and that most of the local Spaniards would interpret his appearance in Manila Bay three weeks before the first armed skirmishes as a sign of his collusion. At his court martial in December 1896, he would state (in the words of the interrogation recorder) that he had immediately sent a message to Blanco, in which he:

entretered His Excellency to be willing to let him make a statement of one kind or another, if a statement were to be permitted to someone in his situation, condemning such criminal methods and that he had never permitted the use of his name. [He took] this step solely to undeceive some wretched men and perhaps to save them. The undersigned in no way desires that this influence his case.<sup>24</sup>

If Blanco actually received such a message, he did not respond to it. But on August 30, 1896, the day after the insurrection began, he personally gave Rizal two letters of introduction in Madrid, one to the Minister

<sup>22</sup> When the Revolution broke out, Blanco had only about 3,000 troops to hand. Four shiploads of Spanish conscripts would arrive in the course of October, giving him a troop strength of just under 8,000. Cuba, with about a quarter of the Philippines' population, was faced with almost twenty times the number of imperial military adversaries. See Corpuz, *The Roots of the Filipino Nation*, vol. 2, p. 233; and for Philippine demographic estimates, vol. 1, pp. 515–70.

<sup>23</sup> Guerrero, *The First Filipino*, p. 409.

<sup>24</sup> The text is given in Palma, *Biografía*, p. 295.

of War and one to the Minister for Overseas Territories. In the former, he wrote:

[Rizal's] behaviour during the four years he stayed in Dapitan was exemplary, and, to my mind, he is all the more worthy of forgiveness and benevolence in that he appears in no way implicated in the chimerical attempts which we all deplore these days, neither in any of the conspiracies nor in any of the secret societies which have been plotting.<sup>25</sup>

The general clearly wanted Rizal safely out of harm's way.

The mailboat left on the scheduled day. When it anchored in Singapore, expatriate supporters visited Rizal on board and urged him to jump ship; they were ready to sue for a British-colonial writ of habeas corpus on his behalf. But he had given Blanco his word of honour that he would go to Spain, and so refused their help. Off Rimbaud's Aden he crossed, on September 25, a large Spanish troopship crammed with conscripts. By the time the ship reached Malta, three days later, he was ordered to remain in his cabin, though he smuggled out one distressed letter to Blumentritt. The ship's captain told him that telegraphed orders had arrived: he would not be going to Cuba. On October 3, 1896, Rizal reached martial-law Barcelona. After three days confinement in his cabin, he was taken under guard to the Montjuich fortress and put in a cell. The next day he was told he would have to return to Manila immediately, sailing on yet another troopship full of reinforcements. On arrival in the Philippines he was imprisoned in Fort Santiago.

What had happened? Shortly after the outbreak of Bonifacio's insurrection, Blanco had appointed, as head of a powerful commission of enquiry into its origins and resources, a certain Colonel Francisco Olivé; unaware that this man, half a decade earlier, had been sent by Weyler to Rizal's home town of Calamba, with orders to use all force necessary to evict the Dominicans' recalcitrant tenants. Olivé, with highly placed War Ministry men behind him, insisted that Rizal be returned to the Philippines to be investigated, and Blanco seems to have been paralysed by the hysteria of the Spaniards in Manila and his own imminent recall. On December 2, 1896, the severely Catholic General Camilo Polavieja arrived in the colonial capital, and took over power from Blanco on December 12. He

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<sup>25</sup> Guerrero, *The First Filipino*, p. 391; translation modified.

stayed in the Philippines only four months, but in that time crushed the rebellion nearly everywhere, except in the province of Cavite.<sup>26</sup>

Polavieja immediately ordered Rizal tried for treason and sedition before a military court. The trial opened on December 26, 1896. In summary proceedings lasting just one day, the judges recommended that the accused be executed. Polavieja approved the recommendation on December 28—Blanco would never have done so—and Rizal was shot in public, at dawn on December 30, 1896, by a squad of Spanish-officered Filipino soldiers. In his last hours he smuggled out, through his sister Trinidad, a Spanish-language poem of farewell to his country, later known as *Mi Último Adiós*, which Bonifacio quickly translated into Tagalog. Over the century since his execution this melancholy, beautiful poem has been translated into several dozen languages. He faced his death with dignity and equanimity. He was just thirty-six. His body was not returned to his family, but buried secretly, for fear that a visible tomb would become a mecca for nationalist pilgrims.

In the meantime, things were going badly for the *insurrectos*. Polavieja's offensive forced Bonifacio, their titular Supremo, to move to Cavite, the last remaining armed stronghold. Here he ran afoul of an ambitious Caviteño clique led by Emilio Aguinaldo, the 27-year-old mayor of the small township of Kawit. Aguinaldo belonged neither to the highly educated *ilustrado* elite exemplified by Rizal, nor to the often autodidact Manilan artisanate, like Bonifacio. His Spanish was shaky, but he was a member of the commercial-farming, medium landowning provincial gentry, and his family was widely connected in the famously endogamous Cavite region. He had joined the Katipunan in March 1895 in a junior capacity. Once the fighting started, however, he demonstrated that he was a born soldier. The following year the Katipunan held a meeting, dominated by the home team Caviteños, and Aguinaldo won election to the supreme leadership over Bonifacio, who in addition was sneered at openly for his low-class origins. Bonifacio did not take this deposition lying down and started to rally what supporters he could. The Aguinaldo group then arrested him, and sentenced him to death for 'treason' to the

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<sup>26</sup> A capable but impatient brute, Polavieja abandoned the Philippines in 1897 in protest against Madrid's unwillingness or inability to send the military reinforcements that he believed necessary to finish off the job. By January 1897 he had received 29,300 troops. After that, nothing (*Corpuz, The Roots*, vol. 2, p. 239). He was succeeded as (the last) Captain-General by Fernando Primo de Rivera.

Revolution he had initiated. Bonifacio and his brother were executed in May 1897. Profiting from these events, Primo de Rivera then succeeded in reducing Cavite to submission, but was unable to capture Aguinaldo and his generals who moved to a rocky fastness well north of Manila, from which no succeeding efforts managed to dislodge them.

### Tárrida's crusade

Among the hundreds imprisoned at Montjuich in the aftermath of the Corpus Christi bombing of June 7, 1896, most were still there when Rizal joined them for one bizarre night in early October. The key exception was the remarkable Cuban creole Fernando Tárrida del Mármol, Rizal's exact age-mate, whom we last encountered accompanying Errico Malatesta on his abortive political tour of Spain at the time of the Jerez émeute of 1892.<sup>27</sup> Born in Havana in 1861, Tárrida had returned to Spain with his family in 1868; his father was a wealthy Catalan manufacturer of boots and shoes. The young Fernando was then packed off to the Lycée in Pau, where a classmate, future French Prime Minister Jean-Louis Barthou, converted him to republicanism. On his return to Spain he moved further to the left, frequenting working-class meetings and clubs while continuing his mathematical studies. At twenty-five, he was a confirmed anarchist, a magnetic lecturer, and contributor to Barcelona's anarchist journal *Acracia* and its daily *El Productor*. In July 1889 he was chosen by the Barcelona workers to represent them at the new International Socialist Congress in Paris.

Tárrida was arrested late—July 21, 1896—in the post-Corpus Christi round-up, and marched to the dungeons of Monjuich from the steps of Barcelona's Polytechnic Academy, where he served as Engineer-Director and distinguished professor of mathematics. He was lucky that a young lieutenant warden there recognized his former teacher, and had the courage to sneak down into Barcelona and wire the news of his incarceration to the national press. Tárrida's cousin, the Marquis of Mont-Roig, a conservative senator, then used his influence and contacts to spring the prisoner on August 27, 1896. Tárrida quietly made his way across the Pyrenees to Paris, then to London, taking with him letters and other documents from his fellow-prisoners that he had managed to get smuggled out.

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<sup>27</sup> 'In the World-Shadow of Bismarck and Nobel', pp. 120–1, fn. 61. In what follows I rely on the splendidly detailed chapter viii ('Anarquismo sin adjetivos') in George Esenwein's *Anarchist Ideology and the Working Class Movement in Spain, 1868–1898*, Berkeley 1989.

The ex-inmate of Montjuich was already a familiar (printed) figure in Paris, from his jousts with the 'Pope of Anarchism' Jean Grave in the pages of *La Révolte*—to which, as we saw in Part Two, many of the leading novelists, poets and painters of Paris were loyal subscribers. In a November 1889 lecture Tárrida had coined the inimitable slogan *anarquismo sin adjetivos* in an attempt to end the bitter quarrels between Marxist and Bakuninist partisans. An 'anarchism without adjectives' would never impose a preconceived economic plan on anyone, since this violated the basic principle of choice; but it was no less opposed to the whole idea of solitary Propaganda by the Deed. Tárrida was promptly denounced by Grave in *La Révolte*, as representing the wrongheaded Spanish anarchist tradition of 'collectivism', i.e. attachment to an organized working-class base. It says a good deal for this Pope's sane rejection of infallibility that he immediately published Tárrida's toreador reply, which argued persuasively that small groups using propaganda of the deed stood no chance against the centralized power of the bourgeoisie. Coordination was essential, since the organized resistance of the working classes was the only productive instrument for fighting state repression.

Tárrida's arguments were important in their own right (and fairly soon convinced Malatesta, Eliée Reclus and others), but in the present context it is their place of publication that matters. A ready audience awaited him when he arrived in Paris after his release from Montjuich. That he was a Cuban in the time of Weyler's massively publicized repression on his native island further secured his entrée. Tárrida's memorable essay, 'Un mois dans les prisons d'Espagne', appeared in *La Revue Blanche*, France's leading intellectual fortnightly, in October 1896, just as Rizal was being taken back from Barcelona to Manila under heavy guard.<sup>28</sup> It was only the first of fourteen articles he wrote for the journal over

<sup>28</sup> See *La Revue Blanche*, 81, October 15, 1896, pp. 337–41. The journal was the brain-child of two pairs of brothers, one Belgian, the other French (the cadet was only 16) who met in Spa in the summer of 1889. The four secured the financial backing of the Natanson brothers, wealthy Polish-Jewish art-dealers who had settled in Paris in 1880. The first number was published in Liège in December 1889. In 1891 the operation moved to Paris, with the middle Natanson brother, Thadée, assuming direct charge, and the fortnightly started appearing in a much more lavish and elegant format. In January 1895, the brilliant Félix Fénéon, recently acquitted of terrorism and sedition in the notorious 'Trial of the Thirty', took over the main editorial work. A committed cosmopolitan anarchist and anti-imperialist, he made the journal more international and leftwing. *La Revue Blanche*'s last issue (no. 312) came out on April 15, 1903. See Joan Undersma Halperin's riveting *Félix Fénéon, Aesthete and Anarchist in Fin-de-siècle Paris*, New Haven 1988, pp. 300–14.

the next fifteen months—on atrocities in Montjuich, the Cuban War of Independence, nationalist movements in the Philippines and Puerto Rico, America's noisy imperialist scheming and, surprisingly, a pre-Wright Brothers text on 'aerial navigation'. But the space given to him at the start in *La Revue Blanche*'s pages was certainly the result of his grim testimony on Montjuich. This was the onset of what would become an 'Atlantic-wide' movement of protest against the Cánovas regime, dubbed by Tárrida 'the Spanish Inquisitors'.

The anti-Cánovas campaign was helped by conjunctural changes. In France, the immediate aftermath of the 1892–94 *attentats* of Ravachol, Vaillant, and Henry had been heavy repression. The so-called *lois scélérates* had banned all revolutionary propaganda. In early August 1894 the famous 'Trial of the Thirty' began, at which Mallarmé appeared as a character witness for Félix Fénéon, '*cet homme doux*'. (When asked by journalists for his general view of the accused—a mix of criminals, anarchists and pro-anarchist intellectuals—the poet replied that he 'did not wish to say anything about these *saints*'.<sup>29</sup>) But by the later 1890s the repression had eased. Three central signs of the changing atmosphere: first, in the early spring of 1897, *La Revue Blanche* published a huge 'Enquête sur la Commune' with contributions by such well-known anarchists as Elisée Reclus, Jean Grave, Louise Michel, Henri Rochefort and Ernest Daudet, in a stellar issue otherwise graced by Alfred Jarry, Jules Laforgue, Mallarmé, Nietzsche, the late 'Multatuli' (Eduard Douwes Dekker), Daniel Halévy, Jean Lorrain, Paul Adam—and Tárrida. Second, whereas in 1894 Captain Alfred Dreyfus's initial kangaroo court martial had attracted little engaged attention, the mood was very different in 1896. Evidence that the Jewish Dreyfus had been framed began to leak out, leading in time to an intense press campaign that forced the state to arrest the real culprit, Major Marie-Charles Esterhazy, in October 1897. His acquittal the day after the trial opened led to Zola's famous *J'accuse* for Clemenceau's *L'Aurore* and the massive political confrontation between Right and Left that became known as the Dreyfus Affair. Third, a longstanding group of Cuban exiles in Paris became especially active after the onset of Martí's uprising, and some of these people

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<sup>29</sup> James Joll, *The Anarchists*, Cambridge, MA 1980, pp. 149–51. See also Eugenia Herbert's subtle *The Artist and Social Reform, France and Belgium, 1885–1898*, New Haven 1961; David Sweetman, *Explosive Acts, Toulouse-Lautrec, Oscar Wilde, Félix Fénéon, and the Art and Anarchy of the Fin-de-Siècle*, New York 1999, p. 495; Jean Maitron, *Le Mouvement anarchiste en France*, Paris 1975, vol. I, p. 137.

successfully lobbied leading journalists like Clemenceau to show support for the cause of their country.

In London, the overlapping Montjuich and Dreyfus affairs aroused widespread indignation, and Tárrida was welcomed there for a lengthy publicity tour by Keir Hardie, Ramsay MacDonald, and others.<sup>30</sup> In a country with a long history of animosity to Spain, accounts of the doings of the 'New Inquisition' found ready ears. The conservative regime in Italy, still at daggers drawn with the Papacy, and humiliated by the Ethiopian monarch Menelik at Adawa in March 1896, was in no position to help its counterpart in Madrid. In Germany, Belgium, Portugal, even in Rumania, as well as the United States and Argentina, Protestant, Freemason, liberal, socialist and anarchist newspapers responded to Tárrida's call for a vociferous campaign against the Spanish government.

In Spain, too, all Cánovas's enemies—in his own party, among the liberals, federalists, republicans and Marxists—found the occasion ripe, for principled or opportunistic reasons, to take up the Montjuich scandal. It helped that among those imprisoned in Barcelona were at least one ex-Minister and three parliamentary deputies. But Cánovas's nerve did not fail him. A few relatively prominent Montjuich prisoners were allowed to go into exile, but most of those not tried before military courts were deported, along with some Cuban 'troublemakers' sent in from Havana, to harsh camps in Spanish Africa. After undergoing excruciating tortures and trial before a military court, the principal suspect for the Corpus Christi bombing, the Frenchman Thomas Ascheri, and four Spaniards (almost certainly innocent) were executed on May 5, 1897—but not before letters describing their sufferings and proclaiming their innocence had been smuggled out by their fellow-prisoners.<sup>31</sup>

### *Cánovas felled*

Then a 26-year-old anarchist from Foggia changed everything. Michele 'Miguel' Angiolillo Lombardi seems to have converted to anarchism while

<sup>30</sup> Many of Tárrida's articles for *La Revue Blanche* were written in London. He liked England and eventually settled down there, becoming, alas perhaps, a Fabian. He died, too young, during the Great War.

<sup>31</sup> Ascheri, ex-seminarist, army deserter and French police informer, also claimed to be an anarchist spy. The real mastermind of Corpus Christi may have been Jean Girault, who escaped to Argentina. Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, p. 192; Rafael Núñez Florencio, *El Terrorismo Anarquista, 1888–1909*, Madrid 1987, pp. 96–7, 161–4.

a conscript. On return to civilian life he worked as a printer, but had to flee Italy in 1895 after publishing an anti-government manifesto. During the following year he drifted to Marseilles, Barcelona, Belgium, London and Paris, before going back to Spain. He is said to have become enraged by what he read in the French newspapers about the torture of anarchists in Montjuich, was electrified by Tárrida's hastily assembled book *Les Inquisiteurs d'Espagne*, and impressed by the public lectures of Henri Rochefort and the Puerto Rican lobbyist for Cuban freedom, Ramón Betances, who denounced Cánovas's responsibility both for Montjuich and the horrors in Cuba.<sup>32</sup> He tracked down Cánovas at the Santa Agueda spa in the Basque country and shot him dead, on August 8, 1897. Angiolillo made no attempt to escape, and was garrotted two weeks later.

Cánovas's assassination not only sounded the death-knell for Restoration 'cacique democracy' in Spain. It also brought with it the fall of Weyler in Havana, as the general immediately understood.<sup>33</sup> On October 31, 1897, Weyler handed over command in Cuba to none other than Ramón Blanco—the man who had tried to save Rizal and who had been forced out of Manila by the clerical lobby's working on the Cánovas cabinet and the Queen Regent. He came with a mandate for leniency, compromise and reform, but it was now too late. The diehard *colons* greeted him with the organized mob violence that Guy Mollet would experience six decades later in Algiers; the revolutionaries had no taste for a second Zanjón; and American imperialism was on the move. Eight months later the United States was master of Cuba. Probably only Weyler had the capacity and determination to give Roosevelt and Hearst a serious run for their money.

### *A folklorist's anarchist education*

By June 1897 the situation in the Philippines was cautiously judged to be improving in the eyes of Primo de Rivera, its last Captain-General. As we have seen, Bonifacio had been executed the month before by the Caviteño clique around Emilio Aguinaldo. The young caudillo had now lost Cavite and was insecurely ensconced in Biak-na-Bató, a

<sup>32</sup> See Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, pp. 197–8.

<sup>33</sup> This moment is well described by Weyler hagiographer Hilario Martín Jiménez in *Valeriano Weyler, De su vida y personalidad, 1838–1930*, Santa Cruz de Tenerife 1998, chapter XIII.

rugged hideout far away on the opposite side of Manila. But local annoyances remained. One such was none other than the amateur folklorist, journalist and businessman Isabolo de los Reyes, whom the Spanish proconsul disliked for ‘the audacity of his temperament and his love of notoriety’.<sup>34</sup> Isabolo had been arrested immediately after the outbreak of the Revolution, and remained in prison till May 17, 1897, when he was pardoned along with about 660 other internees by Primo de Rivera in a post-Polavieja conciliatory gesture. Shortly thereafter the Captain-General received a delegation of the amnestees, believing they had all come to thank him. Isabolo, however, deeply embittered by his wife’s death while he was behind bars, and the regime’s refusal to allow him to attend her funeral or see his orphaned children, brought with him a long, blistering memorandum outlining what he said were the *ilustrados*’ conditions for a peaceful settlement. Chief among them was a demand for the immediate expulsion of the Orders. The Captain-General reacted ‘as though he had been bitten by a snake’, and had Isabolo re-arrested on 20 May, confined in chains in Bilibid Prison, and sent off secretly to martial-law Barcelona.<sup>35</sup> The ship’s captain was ordered to keep the young villain isolated from any contact with Filipinos on board, ‘over whom he exercises considerable influence’.

On arrival in Barcelona in June 1897—Cánovas was still alive and well—Isabolo was soon transferred to Montjuich, whose commandant calmly (and falsely) assured him that only those facing the death penalty were incarcerated in its cells. He was not, by a long chalk, the first Filipino since Rizal to be sequestered in the prison. The sympathetic Catalan anarchist ‘Federico Urales’—arrested after the Corpus Christi bombing because he had courageously adopted Paulino Pallás’s orphaned daughter, after her father’s execution by firing squad (detailed in Part Two), opened a highly popular secular school for children and published an attack on trials by military courts in Barcelona—recalled in his memoirs how, in 1896:

<sup>34</sup> For an account of Isabolo’s extraordinary proto-nationalist *El Folk-Lore Filipino* (1887), written when he was just 23, see ‘The Rooster’s Egg’, NLR 2, March–April 2000. In what follows I rely mainly on the late-lamented William Henry Scott’s funny, pioneering monograph *The Unión Obrera Democrática, First Filipino Labor Union*, Quezon City 1992. This quotation comes on p. 14.

<sup>35</sup> See Mariano Ponce’s letters to Blumentritt of August 18, September 14 and 22, 1897, in Mariano Ponce, *Cartas sobre La Revolución, 1897–1900*, Manila 1932, pp. 23–35, 40–6.

Polavieja immediately began executions and deportations to Spain. One ship laden with insurrectionaries having arrived at Barcelona, the prisoners were incarcerated in the same prison as ourselves. This happened in winter, and those poor Filipino deportees were [still] clothed in their native attire, which consisted simply of drawer-like pants and a cobweb-thin shirt. It was both shaming and melancholy to see the poor Filipinos in the courtyard of the Barcelona prison, pacing about in a circle, kicking at the ground to warm their feet and shivering with cold. It was a noble, beautiful sight to see the prison inmates throwing down into the courtyard shoes, rope-sandals, trousers, vests, jackets, caps, and socks to warm the poor Filipino deportees, in whose country the cold is unknown.<sup>36</sup>

In September 1897 Isidro received a new cell-mate, Ramón Sempau, who on the fourth of that month had tried to assassinate Lieutenant Narciso Portas, the head-torturer of Montjuich—whose name Tárrida, via the European press, had made synonymous with the 'New Inquisition'. Isidro was enchanted by the failed assassin. In old age, he wrote that the Catalan was very well educated:

he knew by heart the scientific names of plants in the Philippines, and later translated Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* into French. In his fight with some hundred police agents, he showed an absolute lack of fear. His very name caused terror in Europe. Yet in reality he was like an honest and good-natured child—yes, even a true Christ by nature... I repeat, on my word of honour, that the so-called anarchists, Nihilists, or, as they say nowadays, Bolsheviks, are the true saviours and disinterested defenders of justice and universal brotherhood. When the prejudices of these days of moribund imperialism have disappeared, they will rightfully occupy our altars.<sup>37</sup>

With Cánovas dead, and Sagasta's opposition coalition in power, the situation of the Montjuich prisoners started to change. On January 8, 1898, Isidro was freed. Thanks to letters of reference from his radical Catalan friends, he found a minor sinecure in the propaganda section of Moret's Ministry for Overseas Territories. His articles on the Philippines, especially his tirades against the Orders, were published in the Radical Republican Party's organ. Armed with a revolver, he plunged happily into the radical demonstrations of the times, without shooting

<sup>36</sup> Urales, *Mi Vida*, Tomo I, pp. 79, 196–7, and 200. His real Catalan name was Joán Montseny, but he took on the Ural Mountains for his first *nom de guerre*.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Scott, *The Unión*, p. 15. This first translation of *Noli Me Tangere* (done jointly by Sempau and the Frenchman Henri Lucas, surely at Isidro's suggesting) came out in Paris in 1898 or 1899 under the title *Au Pays des Moines*.

anyone, but not without getting an occasional bloody nose. When, at the end of 1898, the Treaty of Paris was initialled by which Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States for twenty million 'pieces of silver', Isabelo rushed to start his own newspaper, *Filipinas ante Europa*, and in the two years before he went back home, used it for vitriolic attacks on American imperialism.

While Isabelo and Sempau were still languishing in Montjuich, Aguinaldo in his Biak-na-Bató redoubt decided it was time to form a revolutionary government, and for this purpose a constitution making him president was needed. It is a curious fact that the two *ilustrado* drafters of this document lifted it wholesale from Cuba's revolutionary constitution of 1895, adding only a clause making Tagalog the national language.<sup>38</sup> The caudillo, whose Spanish was weak, and who knew little about the world beyond the Philippines, had no idea of this, and proudly proclaimed the enactment of this 'Filipino' constitution on November 1, 1897. The next day he was sworn in as president.<sup>39</sup> But even before this grand gesture negotiations had begun with Primo de Rivera, who seems to have hoped, under the new regime in Madrid, to secure at best a sort of oriental version of the Pact of Zanjón. By the end of the year, it had been agreed that the rebels would lay down their arms and receive full amnesty, and that Aguinaldo and his officers would leave for Hong Kong with 400,000 pesetas in their pockets.

Meanwhile Washington was on the move. As early as November 1897 Theodore Roosevelt had written that, in the event of war with Spain over Cuba, it would be advisable to send the American Asiatic Squadron to Manila Bay. At the end of February 1898, he ordered Commodore George

<sup>38</sup> The most probable source for the text of the Cuba Constitution is Rizal's and Del Pilar's great friend Mariano Ponce, who had long served as the secretary of the *Solidaridad* group in Madrid. Having nursed Del Pilar through his final days in Barcelona in July 1896, Ponce settled in Hong Kong where he worked to do what he could as a 'telephone operator' for the anti-colonial revolution. There are many extant letters to his Cuban (and often freemason) friends in Paris and Spain, asking for documentary information on the progress of the Cuba Revolution, as well as advice on guerrilla strategy, gun-running, fundraising, and so on. See, for examples in 1897, the letters of May 10, September 8 and October 26 to J. A. Izquierdo in Paris, as well as the June 29 letter to 'Consuelo' perhaps also in Paris. Ponce, *Cartas sobre La Revolución, 1897–1900*, pp. 5–9, 28–32, 59; and 18–21.

<sup>39</sup> Agoncillo, *A Short History*, p. 102. This was the so-called Constitution of Jimaguayú. The Philippines was now only 'two years behind' Cuba.

Dewey to move his base of operations to Hong Kong. When war with Spain was finally declared on April 25, 1898, after the curious explosion of the warship *USS Maine* in Havana's harbour—it had been sent there to intimidate the Spanish—Dewey set off for the Philippines within an hour of getting the official cable. On May 1, he destroyed the obsolete Spanish fleet in sight of Manila's coast, ostensibly to liberate the Filipinos from the Spanish yoke. At Dewey's invitation, Aguinaldo and his men followed from Hong Kong on May 19, 1898. But Washington's real aims soon became clear. Aguinaldo was barred from entering Manila, and while Dewey's people started to fraternize with the defeated Spaniards, relations with the Filipinos steadily deteriorated. With the signing of the Treaty of Paris at the end of 1898, war between the annexationist power and Aguinaldo's newly proclaimed Filipino Republic became inevitable.<sup>40</sup> The Americans, having ferociously denounced Weyler's 'concentration of populations' in Cuba, ended up by adopting this same policy in spades. Perhaps half a million Filipinos died of malnutrition and disease in these concentration zones, as well as in savage counterinsurgency warfare. In March 1901 Aguinaldo was captured and agreed to swear allegiance to the US, but other generals continued the revolutionary war into 1902, and popular resistance persisted in various places till near the end of the decade.

### *Syndicalist soirées*

Isabelo had returned to Manila in October 1901, with his characteristic ebullience and energy. In his bags he had packed a small idiosyncratic library: Aquinas and Voltaire, Proudhon and the Bible, Darwin and Marx, Kropotkin and Malatesta. There is every reason to believe that these were the first texts of Marx and the leading anarchist thinkers, perhaps even of Darwin, to enter the Philippines. His reputation as a staunch adversary of American imperialism had preceded him. The *Manila Times*, mouthpiece

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<sup>40</sup> Aguinaldo had also issued a proclamation that the entire population should mourn, on each anniversary of his death, the National Hero José Rizal. The first monument, two modest Masonic pillars inscribed with the titles of his novels, still survives in the small, hurricane-haunted town of Daet. There are now hundreds of statues of Rizal decorating the plazas of Philippine towns; in Spain and Spanish America, it is common to find streets named after him. In the US he is barely known (though there are statues in San Francisco and Chicago). But in Amoy there is now an entire Rizal theme park, financed mainly by wealthy Hokkien Chinese-Filipinos whose ancestors sailed from that port.

of the swelling population of American business-vultures, immediately denounced him as a dangerous agitator and bloody anarchist. Not by chance: the previous month President McKinley had been shot dead in Buffalo by the 28-year old Polish-American anarchist blacksmith Leon Czolgosz (and succeeded by the hyperthyroid Theodore Roosevelt). The new colonial regime banned Isabelo's planned newspaper, *El Defensor de Filipinas*, and prohibited his proposed Partido Nacionalista.

But Isabelo was not a man easily put down. In old age he recalled that he 'took advantage of the occasion to put into practice the good ideas I had learned from the anarchists of Barcelona'—setting himself, under the noses of the Protestant conquistadors, to radicalize and organize the Manila working class. In this endeavour he had some perhaps unsuspected advantages. Isabelo had always been odd-man-out within the *ilustrado* nationalist intelligentsia, which was overwhelmingly Tagalog: not exactly aristocratic, since there had never been an indigenous 'feudal' state in the Philippines (unlike in neighbouring Indonesia, Malaya and Cambodia); but with aspirations in that direction—especially in the face of a Spanish imperialism which both had strong feudal roots and continued to fancy itself in mediaeval fancy-dress, when the reality was seedy adventurism, shady caciquism, and Orderly landlordism.

Isabelo was just the opposite, an honest businessman, publisher, printer and journalist, who had employees rather than servants, and treated them in a democratic modern spirit. Better still, he was an upcountry boy from the Ilocanos in the far north of Luzon, an ethnic group legendary for its thrift, hard-work, plain speaking—and clannishness. The *Dienstleute* of late nineteenth-century Manila, as Rizal had rather disdainfully put it, were overwhelmingly composed of industrious immigrants from hard-scrabble Ilocos. The incipient working class too, though one would never guess this from reading *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*. Isabelo could talk to these people in their own language, which, in those days, virtually no educated Tagalog knew. He was also perfectly familiar with their sturdy culture of the street and the *barrio*.

In classical fashion, he first organized the printers. Their success encouraged other sectors, and the union became quite quickly a Barcelona-style free-wheeling 'central'—the Unión Obrera Democrática, which would have delighted the Tárrida of *anarquismo sin adjetivos*. The American rulers watched with disbelief and alarm as a huge wave of strikes engulfed

Manila and its surroundings, many of them successful because they were unexpected by capital and administrators alike. They were also befuddled by some of Isabelo's methods. Street demonstrations he had learned in his revolver-waving days in Barcelona. But when he raised money for the strikers and his organization by holding a series of popular balls combined with lectures, and staging *zarzuelas* and other theatricals with themes hostile to the Americans and their elite Filipino collaborators, he was shrewdly tapping the Filipino passion for fiestas, dancing, theatre and music. His last act, before going to prison again for 'labour conspiracy', was to throw a massive party in the working-class district of Tondo, at a newly opened workers' club.<sup>4</sup>

#### POSTSCRIPT

Last January, I was invited to give a lecture on the themes of these three articles by the famously radical-nationalist University of the Philippines, where the influence of (Ilocano) José Maria Sison's Maoist 'new' Communist Party, founded at the end of 1968, remains quite strong. Arriving too early, I filled in time at an open-air coffee-stall. A youngster came by to hand out leaflets to the customers, all of whom casually scrunched them up and threw them away once he had left. I was about to do the same when my eye caught the title: Organize Without Leaders! The content proved to be an attack on the hierarchies of the Philippines—boss-ridden party-political, corporate capitalist, and also Maoist-Communist—in the name of 'horizontal' organized solidarity. The leaflet was unsigned, but a website was appended for further enquiries. This was a serendipity too good to keep to myself. I read it aloud to my audience, and was surprised that almost everyone seemed taken aback. But when I had finished speaking, many hurried up to ask for copies. I am not sure if Rizal would have been pleased by the theme park in Amoy, but I am quite certain that Isabelo would have been enchanted by the leaflet and rushed to his laptop to check out the website *manila.indymedia.org*.

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<sup>4</sup> The UOD collapsed in 1903, but out of its ashes came many other labour organizations and, eventually, a Socialist and a Communist Party. These merged in 1938, led the Hukbalahap guerrilla movement against the Japanese military invaders, and ultimately carried on a revolutionary war against the American-arranged Second Republic, inaugurated on (when else?) July 4, 1946

# BOITEMPO

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## EDITORIAL



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Laura Tavares Soares, César Benjamin, Rafael Gentili  
and Emir Sader

Critical perspectives on the policies, disappointments and hopes set in motion by the first left government in Brazil to have taken the presidency



### UM MORALISTA NOS TRÓPICOS

O visconde de Cairu e o duque de la Rochefoucauld

A Moralist in the Tropics The Viscount of Cairu and the Duc de la Rochefoucauld

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# **NEW LEFT REVIEW**

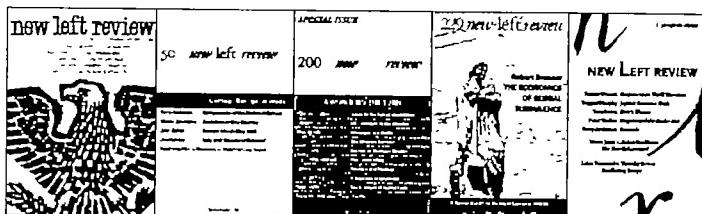
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## REVIEWS

Tommy Franks with Malcolm McConnell, *American Soldier*  
Regan Books: New York 2004, \$27.95, hardback  
590 pp, 0 06 073158 3

ANDREW BACEVICH

### A MODERN MAJOR GENERAL

It is the flip side of the celebrity culture: prominent figures in various walks of life—entertainment, sports, big business, politics—bask in the adulation of the unwashed and inhabit a rarefied world of privilege and deference. But their entrée into that world is highly contingent, requiring that they continue to meet the capricious, even whimsical expectations of their adoring fans. Fail to deliver and the accounting can be as abrupt as it is brutal. Ask the movie star who bombs on successive pictures, the high-priced quarterback who somehow cannot win the big ones, the corporate executive who, for one too many quarters, falls short of ‘market expectations’. Ask Al Gore.

But one highly visible segment of the American elite has been largely exempt from this rule. Ever since the Persian Gulf War of 1990–91, when by common consent the United States established itself as The Greatest Military Power The World Has Ever Seen, those entrusted with commanding us forces have enjoyed a protected status. As newspapers once treated the local archbishop with kid gloves lest they invite the charge of being insufficiently respectful of the Church, so in recent years otherwise free-swinging critics have generally given generals and admirals a pass lest they appear to violate that ultimate diktat of present-day political correctness: never do anything that might suggest less than wholehearted support for our men and women in uniform. As a consequence, those who occupy the uppermost ranks of the armed forces have become the least accountable members of the American

elite. Or perhaps more accurately, members of this exclusive club are unique in being accountable only to their peers.

Consider: when Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez assumed command of coalition forces in Iraq in 2003, the first stirrings of an insurgency had begun to appear; his job was to snuff out that insurgency and establish a secure environment. When Sanchez gave up command a year later, Iraq was all but coming apart at the seams. Security had deteriorated appreciably. The general failed to accomplish his mission, egregiously so. Yet amidst all the endless commentary and chatter about Iraq, that failure of command has gone all but unnoticed, as if for outsiders to evaluate senior officer performance qualifies as bad form. Had Sanchez been a head coach or a CEO, he would likely have been cashiered. But he is a general, so the Pentagon pins a medal on his chest and gives him a pat on the back. It is the dirty little secret to which the World's Only Superpower has yet to own up: as the United States has come to rely ever more heavily on armed force to prop up its position of global pre-eminence, the quality of senior American military leadership has seldom risen above the mediocre. The troops are ever willing, the technology remarkable, but first-rate generalship has been hard to come by.

Tommy Franks would dispute that charge. To rebut it, he would cite his own achievements as the senior field commander during the US-led incursion into Afghanistan in 2001 and the invasion of Iraq in 2003. In each case, a brilliantly conceived plan—*his* plan, implemented under *his* direct control—resulted in decisive victory, gained with economy and dispatch. Indeed, the whole point of *American Soldier* is to stake out Franks's claim to being one of history's Great Captains. Readers predisposed to see Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom in glowing terms may well find the general's efforts to sustain his case persuasive. Those alive to the fact that Iraq has become a full-fledged quagmire and Afghanistan only slightly less so will find the general's claim to be ranked among the immortals less compelling. But even they will profit from reading *American Soldier*. For the account that Franks provides is as instructive as it is revealing. Given the vast pretensions and militarized nature of present-day US foreign policy, this is a document of genuine significance, as timely as it is troubling.

In terms of its overall composition, *American Soldier* adheres to, and therefore helps to legitimate, an emerging literary tradition: the military memoir as narrative of national redemption. As the wars, excursions and alarms of the post-Cold War era have piled up, so too have the published remembrances of senior American military leaders. In its latter-day form, this genre comes in two distinctive variants. Those falling into the first category are easily identified: in every instance, two-inch-tall letters on the dust jacket identify the author as Tom Clancy, who has actually never served a day in uniform. Underneath the author's name, almost as an afterthought

in much smaller type, comes the acknowledgement that Clancy penned his account 'with General Johnny So-and-So (ret.)'.

For the better part of a decade Clancy, who achieved fame and fortune writing techno-thrillers, has been churning out these military chronicles with the same regularity that he produces best-selling novels. There are now four such volumes, the first three—*Into the Storm* (1997), *Every Man a Tiger* (1999) and *Shadow Warriors* (2002)—co-written, respectively, with Generals Fred Franks, Chuck Horner and Carl Stiner, who all occupied senior command positions in Operation Desert Storm. The most recent was produced in conjunction with the marine officer who preceded Tommy Franks as head of United States Central Command, or CENTCOM, with an area of operations spanning East Africa, the Middle East and Central Eurasia. This is *Battle Ready* (2004), by Tom Clancy with General Tony Zinni (ret.) and Tony Koltz—the addition of a third collaborator/ghost writer making it more difficult still to know exactly how much credence to give to these concoctions. The books give the impression of being not so much written as assembled—which is a shame: Zinni is, in fact, a thoughtful and interesting man who has emerged of late as an ardent critic of the Bush administration's conduct of its so-called global war on terror. But whether or not the critique expressed in *Battle Ready* actually qualifies as his own is anyone's guess.

The second category of modern-day senior officer memoir is the one into which *American Soldier* blessedly falls. Although typically written with outside assistance, these books manage at least to retain a semblance of authenticity. The Norman Schwarzkopf of *It Doesn't Take a Hero* (1993) may be a somewhat sanitized version of the real Stormin' Norman. Certainly, the account of Operation Desert Storm forming the core of his narrative is self-serving. But the overall product bears at least some similarity to the genuine article. Much the same can be said about Colin Powell, who describes his military career in *My American Journey* (1995), or Wesley Clark, who in *Waging Modern War* (2001) recounts a journey to high command that culminates in the struggle for Kosovo.

Whether of the manufactured or handcrafted variety, virtually every one of these narratives conforms to a prescribed formula. The protagonist, after an upbringing spent acquiring a profound appreciation for American values, joins the armed forces and serves as a young officer in Vietnam. This war becomes the pivot around which all else turns—Franks, for example, titles the chapter describing his own Vietnam service 'The Crucible'. From his experience in a lost war, the protagonist derives certain essential truths that he vows to apply if ever called upon in some future crisis to serve in a position of authority. Upon returning home from battle, although dismayed to see his countrymen shunning those who served and sacrificed, he soldiers on, rising through the ranks during a lengthy apprenticeship.

When his moment finally arrives, he orchestrates a great victory, by implication showing how Vietnam *ought* to have been fought. In vanquishing the enemy, he also helps heal old wounds at home, promoting both reconciliation and national renewal. Somewhat less loftily, in recounting this triumph the protagonist also makes use of every available opportunity to settle scores with old enemies and critics.

In *American Soldier*, the initial elements of this sequence stand out as clearly the best. The adopted only child of loving, working-class parents, Franks tells the story of his hardscrabble upbringing with wit and charm. Growing up in small town Oklahoma and Texas meant 'living the American dream': exploring the outdoors and playing ball, rebuilding motorbikes and drag racers, chasing girls and drinking beer. When too much of the latter resulted in Franks flunking out of college, he enlisted in the army and in 1967 earned his commission through Officer Candidate School. Soon thereafter, the green-as-grass second lieutenant was off to Southeast Asia. Franks describes his year of combat as a field artilleryman in vivid detail. Cool-headed, courageous and resourceful, he took to soldiering with the same alacrity as he had the carefree pursuits of boyhood. Although in joining up Franks had viewed the army as a detour eventually leading back to fraternity row, he found in military service a life that soon became a calling. When he returned from Vietnam in 1968 and contemplated the prospect of attending school alongside 'guys who'd used student deferments to protest the war', he wasted little time in deciding to make the military a career. In the Cold War army of the 1970s and 1980s, he excelled. Franks sought out tough, demanding jobs and then delivered results. He was an ambitious officer who loved his family, but put his career first and steadily climbed the ladder of success. The Gulf War of 1990–91 found him a brigadier general. Ten years later, now wearing four stars, he assumed command of CENTCOM.

All the while Franks had cultivated a rough-around-the-edges, country-boy persona—the kid from west Texas professing amazement at how far he had come. 'I had learned over the years that sometimes it's useful to operate behind a self-deprecating façade', he observes in an aside. Behind that façade, now Franks wants it known, was an erudite student of his profession and an original thinker. (Sensitive as well: Franks writes poetry, and *American Soldier* includes several unfortunate excerpts of his verse.) During his apprenticeship, he 'had read about both war and peace: the accumulated wisdom of Sun Tzu and Clausewitz, Bertram [sic] Russell and Gandhi'. Moreover, Franks insists, right from the outset he had been a 'maverick' who found himself as a consequence 'frequently on the outside of the Army's conservative mainstream'.

In fact, Franks presents precious little evidence of free-thinking as he made his way to the top. Although he sprinkles his tale with quotations from long-deceased Chinese and German philosophers (none from the mysterious

Mr Russell), his observations about war and politics do not rise above the pedestrian. Franks writes knowingly of ‘a continuum of interaction between nations, factions and tribes’. But he then translates that insight into his ‘Five Cs’ theory of international politics, in which all interstate relationships fit into one of five categories: Conflict, Crisis, Co-existence, Collaboration or Cooperation. And although as a junior commander or staff officer, Franks on occasion tinkered gingerly with military orthodoxy, he remained at all times comfortably within the system. In short, whether for good or for ill, by the time he ascended to command of CENTCOM in 2000, Franks had become the archetype of the Modern Major General.

That means among other things that Franks carried with him all the grudges that the officer corps had accumulated in Vietnam and has nursed ever since. In *American Soldier* these grudges emerge intact, with Franks piling on a few more of his own. Thus, several times in the course of this account, he lets fly at the media for what he describes as inaccurate, biased and explicitly anti-military reporting. He takes swipes at ‘the intellectual arrogance’ of civilian officials back in Washington, who imagine that air power alone ‘could kick open a door, through which exiled Iraqi opposition groups would march triumphantly to liberate their country’. Such notions, writes Franks, were ‘absurd’, as were expectations that Iraqi exile Ahmad Chalabi—a fraudulent ‘Gucci leader’—would be able to unite Iraq’s various ethnic and religious factions.

Among the civilians that Franks scorches are Richard Clarke, the former White House anti-terrorism czar, dismissed as an impractical blowhard, and Douglas Feith, Undersecretary of Defence for policy and ‘the dumbest fuck-ing guy on the planet’. He likens these amateurs to ‘McNamara and his Whiz Kids [who] had repeatedly picked individual bombing targets and approved battalion-size manoeuvres’. Franks refuses to tolerate any such meddling. ‘My name is not Westmoreland,’ he growls during the Afghan campaign, ‘and I’m not going to go along with Washington giving tactics and targets to our kids in the cockpits and on the ground.’

Nor does the general spare his own fellow professionals. He rails against the ‘ill-informed, disgruntled leakers finishing a dead-end career in some Pentagon cubicle’ who presume to second-guess him. He derides the ‘mother-fucking tv generals’, many of whom ‘were much better tv analysts than they had been military officers’. But he reserves his most ferocious salvo for the four-stars assigned as service chiefs. Advice proffered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff amounts to nothing more than ‘parochial bullshit’. Franks expresses unmitigated contempt for the ‘Title Ten motherfuckers’, who by law have no command authority and, hence, should refrain from nitpicking the plans of ‘warfighters’ such as himself.

There is more here than histrionics. Sustaining the case for the general's induction into Valhalla requires that he demonstrate that he, and he alone, bears responsibility for the victories won in Afghanistan and especially Iraq. Franks wants to ensure that anyone finding fault with his performance does not get much of a hearing. But he also wants to make sure that no one horns in and claims laurels that he views as rightly his own. Yet in this regard, Clarke, Feith, the tv generals and even the Joint Chiefs are comparative small fry. In imperial America, despite all the trappings of democracy, a relative handful of people exercise real power. (The imperial reference is not gratuitous: at one point Franks compares his role to that of 'the Roman proconsul [Marcus Aemilius] Scaurus'; elsewhere he toys with the image of himself cloaked in 'a purple-trimmed toga and a laurel wreath'.) Depending on the issue, but especially in matters related to national security, decision-making at the summit involves as few as half a dozen serious players. To show that when it came to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq he was really in charge, Franks must demonstrate that in the strategic interaction at the top *his* was the dominant voice. Franks must show, in short, that his role involved much more than simply following orders.

As Franks knows but does not acknowledge, contemporaneous reporting had suggested otherwise. The press had credited Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld with devising the methods employed in Afghanistan and Iraq. In his own inimitable style, Rumsfeld had nudged, cajoled and browbeaten a plodding theatre commander into embracing a novel approach to warfare that on successive occasions produced spectacular results—so at least the story went. Not so, Franks insists. From 9/11 on, he was the one driving the train: 'CENTCOM "pushed strategy up", rather than waiting for Washington to "push tactics down".' At great length—this book gives substantially more attention to campaign planning than to fighting as such—Franks explains how he patiently educated the President and the Defence Secretary about contemporary warfare and brought them around to his own vision for how best to take down the Taliban and Saddam Hussein.

Although Franks professes to hold George W. Bush in the highest regard, the commander-in-chief emerges from this account as an affable, cliché-spouting airhead. Bush cheerfully presides over various briefings, offers a few random questions, and wraps things up with pithy admonitions like 'Great job, Tommy. Keep it up. We will do what we have to do to protect America.' Rumsfeld comes off as a more formidable interlocutor, repeatedly testing his field commander's patience and kept in line only through the most careful management. But Franks leaves no doubt that at the end of the day the twin invasions of 2001 and 2003 were fought his way.

The Franks vision, one that placed a premium on speed, surprise, deception, precision weapons and the integration of all services into a fully unified

fighting team, put him, he states categorically, 'way outside the box of conventional doctrine'. The upshot: two remarkable wins, the second of which Franks describes as 'unequalled in its excellence by anything in the annals of war'. But great as these accomplishments are, Franks wants it known that they possess a significance that continues to reverberate well beyond the battlefield. At home, victory triggered the revival of a 'constant, deep patriotism by those who salute the flag, and by those who wave the flag'—Americans returning to those enduring values that young Tommy Franks had imbibed back in 1950s Texas. More substantively, the campaigns over which Franks presided constituted 'a true revolution in warfare'. The victories won in Afghanistan and Iraq thus provide assurances of US military supremacy as far as the eye can see.

Yet in making such spacious assertions as both field commander and architect of a radically new American way of war, Franks puts himself in a fix not unlike that of Douglas MacArthur at the end of 1950. When, in September of that year, US forces at Inchon turned the tables on the North Koreans and instantly transformed the Korean War, MacArthur wanted no doubt left that the brilliance displayed was his and his alone. But in remarkably short order the masterstroke of Inchon gave way to the shock of Chinese intervention, with the tables turning again. Try as he might, MacArthur could not claim ownership of the first without also being tagged with responsibility for the second.

Franks retired from active duty shortly after the well-televised toppling of Saddam Hussein's statue in Al Firdos Square, and thus cannot be held directly responsible for all that has transpired since in Iraq and Afghanistan; but neither can he ignore those developments. His efforts to explain them away, however, are feeble at best. With regard to the war against Saddam, Franks claims to have anticipated all along that the so-called Phase IV—the occupation and rehabilitation of Iraq—would be the most difficult and protracted. He states repeatedly that he expected the occupation to last several years and to require up to 250,000 coalition troops—although his own plan did not provide for anything close to that number. (Nowhere in *American Soldier* is there mention of the prescient pre-war estimate by one of Franks's Title Ten colleagues that the occupation might well consume several hundred thousand troops.)

Although Franks had speculated that 'postwar Iraq might be modelled on post-World War II Japan or Germany', he shows little indication of having grasped the political or economic challenges that nation-building might entail. After the fall of Baghdad, Franks was on the phone to General Richard Myers, the JCS chairman, offering up bright ideas: 'Dick, we need a major donor conference—hosted in Washington—to line up support, money and

troops, as rapidly as possible.' But by then it was too late; events were already outrunning the ability of the United States to control them.

Conditions have only worsened since. But for his part Franks remains stubbornly upbeat. Phase IV, he insists in surveying recent developments, is 'actually going about as I had expected'. Despite the 'daily parade of negative headlines', Iraq is well on its way to success. Brushing aside the Abu Ghraib torture scandals as the work of a few bad apples and expressing confidence that the violence will soon taper off, he predicts that 'a year from now, Iraq will be a different country'. With US deaths climbing toward 1000, with some US troops involuntarily extended in the combat zone and others returning for a second tour, and with the Washington-installed Iraqi government looking wobbly, it is difficult to share Franks's breezy optimism. One might even say that he is beginning to sound a bit like a TV general.

But forget all that and grant Franks his Inchon: his headlong thrust on Baghdad splintered Iraqi defences and swiftly overturned the Ba'ath Party regime. No one can dispute that. Ironically, however, credit for this success is due at least in part to the fact that the principal rationale for the entire enterprise—Saddam Hussein's stock of chemical and biological weapons—turned out to be a chimera. Again and again, Franks emphasizes his certainty (and that of his bosses) that Saddam possessed weapons of mass destruction and thus posed a dire threat to the United States and its interests. In fact, of course, the Iraqi dictator had no such arsenal and posed no real threat other than to his own people. Franks shrugs off the error—as if it were simply an honest mistake—without bothering to consider the extent to which his reputation for military genius hangs on his having been so wildly wrong in estimating the enemy's capabilities. Had Saddam actually possessed usable WMD, it is reasonable to speculate that 'major combat operations' would have gone less swimmingly well. If so, the story that General Franks would be telling today would be considerably different.

Nor, it must be said, does Franks's effort to portray the Iraqi army of 2003 as a formidable force—at one point he compares the Republican Guard to Hitler's Waffen SS—stand up to close scrutiny. The fact is that Saddam's army never recovered from the drubbing that it endured in 1991. More than a decade of economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation, plus aerial bombardment from 1998 onwards, had made any such recovery impossible. Thus, although Franks does not mention the fact, by 2003 Iraq for all practical purposes did not possess an air force—no small matter in an age when air power has come to dominate conventional warfare.

Franks asserts that 'there's never been a combat operation as successful as Iraqi Freedom'. Only the narrowest definition of success makes that claim sustainable. In fact, the tangible benefits accruing from America's victory over Saddam Hussein have been few. In a sense, the US-led invasion of Iraq in

2003 bears comparison to Germany's invasion of Norway in 1940 or its lunge into Yugoslavia the following year. At the moment of execution, each seemed to affirm impressions that the German military juggernaut was unstoppable. But once the dust had settled, it became apparent that neither victory had brought the Nazi regime any closer to resolving the main issue. Each had saddled the Wehrmacht with burdens that it could ill afford to bear.

Then there is the almost forgotten matter of Afghanistan. The aim of Operation Enduring Freedom had been to 'squeeze into extinction' the terrorists and terrorist-sympathizers present in that country. By the end of 2001, Franks declares, 'we had accomplished our mission'. But this is palpable nonsense. To be sure, the US intervention in Afghanistan damaged Al Qaeda and ousted the Taliban regime—hardly trivial accomplishments. But Operation Enduring Freedom came nowhere near to destroying either organization. Of equal moment—although the point receives scant attention in *American Soldier*—both Osama bin Laden and Taliban leader Mullah Omar managed to elude the forces that Franks commanded. Three years after they first arrived US troops find themselves engaged in an arduous, open-ended effort to maintain even the most tenuous stability. They will not be going home anytime soon. In Afghanistan, General Franks no more accomplished his mission than did the younger von Moltke when he took the German army partway to Paris in 1914. Franks wrote *American Soldier* in hopes of securing his place in history. But in both Iraq and Afghanistan, history appears to be moving in directions not helpful to his cause.

Finally, no one even remotely familiar with recent trends in military affairs will find persuasive the general's efforts to portray himself as an out-of-the-box thinker. The belief that information technology is transforming force from a blunt to a precision instrument of unprecedented versatility—among other things, providing commanders, Franks writes, with 'the kind of Olympian perspective that Homer had given his gods'—has been a shibboleth for the past quarter-century. At most, Franks appropriated the ideas of others and nudged US military doctrine further along the path down which it was already headed—completely oblivious to the possibility that this path like any other just might lead into an ambush.

As to denunciations of service parochialism and calls for greater 'jointness', they are today about as fresh (and as brave) as politicians speaking out against racial bigotry. At least since the days of Eisenhower, senior Army commanders have been touting the imperative of inter-service cooperation. Over the past twenty years even Air Force generals and Navy admirals have climbed on the jointness bandwagon—though, as with old-school politicos from the Deep South proclaiming their devotion to racial harmony, the depth of Air Force and Navy conviction may on occasion be in doubt. In short, the author's claim to being a bold original is bogus.

Yet even if the victories that Franks won have lost some of their initial lustre, and even if he was never quite the innovator he purports to be, *American Soldier* retains considerable value. Indeed, even if a decade from now the ambiguity that has come to surround General Schwarzkopf's once-famous liberation of Kuwait envelops the liberation of Afghanistan and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, students of American globalism will still find in *American Soldier* a treasure trove of insight, if they read the book with the care it deserves. For these pages shed considerable light on one of the great unanswered questions of the day: how is it that over the past decade-and-a-half, as US forces have gone from one storied triumph to the next, the security of the United States has become ever more precarious? Why, when we flex our military muscles on behalf of freedom and peace, does the world beyond our borders become all the more cantankerous and disorderly? Madeleine Albright irritated Colin Powell by famously asking, 'What's the point of having this great army you're always talking about if we can't use it?' From our present perspective, a better question might be: 'What's the point of using this great army if the result is Fallujah, Najaf and Karbala?'

Of course, these are perplexing matters for which there is no neat, tidy explanation. Greed, envy, miscalculation, sheer stupidity, ideological blinders, the nature of the international system, the sins of past generations coming home to roost, the hubris of militarized civilian elites, the iron law of unintended consequences: all of these deserve mention. But in *American Soldier* we see on vivid display one additional factor: the political naïveté and strategic ineptitude of military officers selected and presumably groomed for high command. Far from being a maverick marching to his own drummer, Franks embodies a set of convictions and prejudices common among officers of his generation. Ever since they returned from the jungles and rice paddies over thirty years ago, members of that generation have been engaged in a project that aims, as it were, to put right all that the luckless William Westmoreland got wrong. In essence, they want to reverse the verdict of Vietnam.

More specifically, they have sought to purge war of politics, reconstituting the conception of war as the exclusive province of military professionals. Throughout *American Soldier*, Franks makes it abundantly clear that he views political considerations as at best a distraction, if not an outright impediment. (Discussing the understanding he reached, 'soldier-to-soldier', with Pakistan's Pervez Musharraf in the run-up to US operations in Afghanistan, Franks writes that such a partnership could have been forged long before, were it not for the 'diplomatic envoys in business suits [who] had hectored soldier-politicians such as Musharraf about human rights and representative government'.) Never having forgiven Robert McNamara, he and other members of his generation instinctively view civilians as troublemakers,

constantly straying onto turf that rightly belongs to soldiers. Averting such unwelcome encroachments constitutes a categorical imperative.

Keeping civilians where they belong and reasserting a professional monopoly over the conduct of warfare requires drawing the clearest possible line to prevent politics and war from becoming tangled up with one another. Whereas Westmoreland, remembered today as too much the political general, allowed the Whiz Kids to intrude in matters that belonged under his purview, the subalterns who experienced the frustrations of defeat but then stayed on after Vietnam to revive American military power have vowed never to let that happen again. They insist that the conduct of war be recognized as *their* business and theirs alone. Hence, the general-in-chief who (like Franks) experiences combat vicariously in the comfort of an air-conditioned headquarters nonetheless insists on styling himself a chest-thumping 'war-fighter'. He does so for more than merely symbolic reasons: asserting that identity permits him to advance prerogatives to which the officer corps lays absolute claim. This is *my* business; the suits—Franks would likely employ coarser language—should stay out.

It is the sort of sharp distinction between war and politics that Douglas Haig or Erich Ludendorff would have appreciated and understood. But what gets lost in drawing such distinctions—as Haig and Ludendorff lost it in World War I—is any possibility of strategic coherence. Fighting is, of course, integral to war. But, if in ways not always appreciated by or even agreeable to those who actually pull triggers and drop bombs, war is also and always profoundly political. Indeed, if war is to have any conceivable justification and prospect of utility, it must remain subordinated to politics. Effecting that subordination lies at the very heart of strategy. In the tradition of which Franks is an exponent there is a powerful tendency to resist this formulation. Thus, although the author of *American Soldier* mouths Clausewitzian slogans, when it comes to the relationship of war and politics, he rejects the core of what Clausewitz actually taught. And in that sense he typifies the post-Vietnam American officer.

Clausewitz sees the nature of war as complex and elusive; generalship requires not only intensive study and stalwart character, but also great intuitive powers. For Franks, war is a matter of engineering—and generalship the business of organizing and coordinating materiel. Thus, the Franks who reduces international politics to 'five Cs' offers up a similarly schematic notion of strategy. When first directed by Rumsfeld to begin planning the invasion of Iraq, Franks sat down, legal pad in hand, and sketched out what he calls his 'template' for decisive victory. The resulting matrix, which *American Soldier* proudly reprints in its original handwritten form, consists of seven horizontal 'lines of operation'—enumerating us capabilities—intersecting with nine vertical 'slices', each describing one source of Saddam

Hussein's hold on power. At select points of intersection—thirty-six in all—Franks drew a 'starburst'. For purposes of further planning, these defined points of main effort.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with generals sketching out 'lines and slices'. Commanders no longer wage war by pointing their swords at the enemy and hollering 'Charge!'. Campaign planning requires checklists and schedules, readily identifiable priorities and unambiguous lines of authority. If a seven-by-nine matrix can lend order to the process of gearing up a force for war, that is all to the good. But even a casual examination of Franks's sketch shows that it does not even remotely approximate a strategy. It is devoid of any political context. Narrowly focused on the upcoming fight, it pays no attention to the aftermath. Defining the problem as Iraq and Iraq alone, it ignores other power relationships and makes no provision for how war might alter those relationships, whether for good or ill. It is completely ahistorical and makes no reference to culture, religion or ethnic identity. It has no moral dimension. It fails even to provide a statement of purpose. But according to Franks, it is an exquisitely designed example of what he terms '*basic grand strategy*' (emphasis in the original).

Here we come face to face with the essential dilemma with which the United States has wrestled ever since the Soviets had the temerity to deprive us of a stabilizing adversary—a dilemma that the events of 9/11 only served to exacerbate. The political elite that ought to bear the chief responsibility for formulating grand strategy instead nurses ideological fantasies of remaking the world in America's image, as the Bush administration's *National Security Strategy* of 2002 so vividly attests. Meanwhile, the military elite that could possibly puncture those fantasies and help restore a modicum of realism to us policy instead obsesses over operations. Reluctant to engage in any sort of political-military dialogue that might compromise their autonomy, the generals allow fundamental questions about the relationship between power and purpose to go unanswered and even unrecognized.

Into this void between the illusions of the political class and the fears of the generals disappears the possibility of establishing some equilibrium between ends and means. Instead, the United States careens ever closer to bankruptcy, exhaustion and imperial overstretch. The us today has vast ambitions for how the world should operate, too vast to be practical. It wields great power, though not nearly so much as many imagine. But there exists nothing even approaching a meaningful strategy to meld the two together. In *American Soldier*, Tommy Franks helps us understand why.

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MICHAEL LÖWY

## SURREALISM'S NAMELESS SOLDIER

Artists are often outsiders and transgressors, but few of them embody as many boundary-defying qualities as Claude Cahun: lesbian Surrealist, dissident Marxist, non-Jewish Jew, photographer, poet, critic and resistance activist. Long overlooked in standard accounts of Surrealism—she rates only a footnote mention in Maurice Nadeau's canonical *Histoire du surréalisme* (1945)—Cahun's work has recently been rediscovered by exhibition organizers and art critics alike, as part of a wider reassessment of the movement over the last decade that has often brought attention to previously neglected figures. Now acknowledged as the only significant female photographer in the Surrealist group—Lee Miller and Dora Maar having only an ephemeral relation to it—Cahun is today best known for her disquieting self-portraits, in which her striking, stern features are crowned by shaved hair or hidden beneath a disguise, and her eerie montages of objects and body-parts. Her writings, however, have until now remained out of print or dispersed. François Leperlier, author of the first serious study of Cahun in 1992, has gathered a beautifully presented selection containing both her published work and much previously unavailable material from her autobiographical notebooks. Together, these provide the first overall view of her literary and political evolution, offering rare insights into the thinking of this enigmatic figure.

Cahun was born in Nantes in 1894 as Lucy Schwob, into a well-to-do Anglophilic family with numerous literary connections. Her grandfather, George Schwob, was a schoolmate of Gustave Flaubert and friend of Théophile Gautier and Jules Verne; her great-uncle Léon Cahun was an Oriental scholar and novelist with connections to the Symbolists, with whom her

uncle Marcel Schwob—author of *Livre de Monelle*, one of André Breton's favourite works—was still more closely involved. Cahun's father owned the newspaper *Le Phare de la Loire*, and it was here that her first writings—a fashion column and cinema reviews—appeared in 1913. By 1916 she had settled on Claude Cahun as her pseudonym, combining reference to her Jewish background—Cahun, her grandmother's maiden name, is a variant of Cohen—with a sexually ambivalent first name. In 1909 she met Suzanne Malherbe, forming a childhood friendship that would grow into a life-long love attachment; in 1917, when Cahun's widowed father married Malherbe's mother, her companion also became her step-sister.

Cahun and Malherbe moved to Paris in the early 20s, where Cahun became active in theatre—the spur for many of her costumed self-portraits, which were the key element of the photographic repertoire she began to develop more intensely as of the mid-twenties. Towards the end of the decade she befriended the Communist editors of the journal *Philosophies*, and maintained close relations with writers such as Robert Desnos—expelled from the Surrealist movement in 1929—and Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes. But there is little in Cahun's writings up to this time that points towards either Marxism or Surrealism. One could perhaps identify a distaste for capitalist civilization in the fascination with ancient Greece and Rome displayed by *Vues et visions* (1919), a series of Symbolist-inspired narratives magnificently illustrated with decadent line drawings by 'Marcel Moore', Malherbe's pen name. Cahun's dense, elliptical autobiographical work of 1930, *Aveux non avenus* (perhaps best rendered as 'Cancelled Confessions'), contains no reference to any political commitments; but despite its narcissism, a sort of radicalism emerges in statements such as 'I would like to sew, sting, kill, only with the extreme point . . . To travel only at the prow of myself'. There are moments, too, when wider aspirations are conveyed: 'I have spent 33 years of my life desiring passionately, blindly, that things be different from how they are'.

The reasons for Cahun's belated shift to Surrealism and revolutionary politics around 1932 remain somewhat opaque. Though she rarely comments on her sexuality in her writings, it is possible that her status as 'sexual dissident' played a role in her radicalization: a staunch non-conformist, Cahun would undoubtedly have sympathized with movements that challenged traditional morals and the established forms of the family. The global conjuncture would surely also have influenced her thinking, with capitalism in crisis and communism seemingly the only force offering a bulwark against fascism. At any rate, her writings from this time indicate a progression from the idealist ethical and metaphysical positions of Symbolism, via a radical pessimism inspired by Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, to a heterodox version of historical materialism. In some autobiographical notes written after the Second World

War, for instance, Cahun stated that she had discovered historicity around 1931, as 'the Sphinx's essential answer to my personal enigma'.

At the end of 1932, both Cahun and Malherbe joined the Communist-dominated Association des Écrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires (AEAR), and soon aligned themselves with the Trotskyist opposition inside it, known as the 'Brunet group'. Cahun's decision to join the AEAR may have been connected to her growing sympathy for Surrealism, since André Breton and his circle had finally been admitted to the organization in October 1932, following a change in Communist cultural policy. Her name appears, together with those of the Surrealists, among the signatories of two important AEAR tracts from 1933—one denouncing the triumph of fascism in Germany, and another entitled 'Against Fascism but also Against French Imperialism!' But dissident stances soon became impossible within what Cahun called 'the Stalinizing AEAR', and when Breton was expelled in June 1933, Cahun and the rest of the Brunet group followed.

For the next three years, Cahun would be passionately committed to Surrealism, and to Breton in particular. The two had met early in 1933, and if Cahun was magnetically attracted to Breton, the fascination was at least in part returned. Writing to Cahun in September 1938, Breton declares that 'it is quite probable . . . that you are endowed with a very extensive magic power'; he encourages her to write, saying that 'you know very well that I consider you one of the most curious spirits of our times'. Such an assessment would no doubt initially have been confirmed by Cahun's provocative dress-sense: she would dye her close-cropped hair pink or gold, and would often wear a suit and a monocle. Her eccentric appearance could be regarded as the expression of a rebel queer consciousness, rejecting assigned identities in favour of a constant re-invention of self. But it was, at first, greeted with mixed feelings in Surrealist circles—reactions perhaps tinged, in some cases, with homophobia.

Attitudes began to change, however, after the publication in 1934 of Cahun's pamphlet *Les Paris sont ouverts* (literally, 'The Bets are Open', or 'It's Anyone's Guess'). First produced as an internal report for the literary section of the AEAR in January–February 1933, it is a passionate defence of poetic autonomy against bureaucratic attempts to force art into ideological conformity. During the next few years, *Les Paris* became the main reference point for the Surrealists on the controversial question of poetry's relation to revolutionary politics, and was extensively quoted by Breton in his *Qu'est-ce que le surréalisme?* (1934). Cahun proposes a distinction between two main forms of influence poetry can have on its readers: direct action, either by repeated affirmation or provocation, and indirect action, which leaves readers to reach their own conclusions. Examples of the former would be revolutionary songs, catechisms, prayers, proverbs, axioms and 'commercial

and ideological advertising'; propaganda poetry in this mode, Cahun argues, amounts to nothing more than 'revolutionary masturbation'. In her view, only a poetry that 'keeps its secret' can be effective and artistically legitimate. Indirect action 'leaves something to be desired', in Breton's words; it can work dialectically, by provoking a contradiction, as in Marx's praise for the achievements of the bourgeoisie, or when Rimbaud ventriloquizes a rabid ruling class:

In the central countries we shall nourish the most cynical  
prostitution. We will massacre logical revolts.

In peppered and rain-wet countries!—at the service of the most  
monstrous industrial and military exploitations.

The second part of the essay is largely taken up with a polemic against Louis Aragon, who had broken with the Surrealists in 1931 over his poems praising the GPU, and who was now offering his unconditional support for Soviet cultural policy. Cahun denounces the poverty of Aragon's current work, comparing it unfavourably with his earlier verses, and condemning the 'mercenary indignity' of propaganda poetry *tout court*. True poetry, Cahun argues, does not obey any external commands, but is the free expression of individuals 'in their most secret inner self', the result of 'the instantaneous force of emotion at any moment of intimate or collective life'. The anarchist individualism of such views seems to foreshadow the call of the Breton-Trotsky Manifesto of 1938: 'All freedom in art!' The withering sarcasm with which Cahun refers to Stalin, meanwhile, and the pamphlet's dedication to Trotsky—citing his sympathy for Mayakovsky during the most difficult days of the Revolution—indicate that she was at least two years ahead of the other Surrealists, who collectively broke with Stalinism only in 1935. *Les Paris* is dotted with slightly unfocused quotations from Marx, Engels and Lenin; but in theoretical terms, Cahun's reflections on poetry owe more to Romanticism, Symbolism and Hegelian aesthetics than to the sort of vulgar Marxism which—with a few exceptions, such as Norbert Guterman, Henri Lefebvre and Pierre Naville—predominated in France at that time. In true Surrealist spirit, Cahun rejects the suggestion that poetry is the product of any 'class mechanism', emphasizing instead its intimate link to erotic feelings, its magical power and capacity to produce emotional short-circuits.

By this time Cahun had befriended not only the author of the Surrealist Manifestos and his companion Jacqueline Lamba, but also Tristan Tzara, Salvador Dalí, Benjamin Péret and René Crevel. Surprisingly, however, Cahun did not sign any of the Surrealists' collective declarations from 1934 or 1935, her name first appearing among the signatories only with the formation of the ill-fated 'Contre-attaque' group in the autumn of 1935. A joint initiative

of Breton and Georges Bataille, 'Contre-attaque' aimed to fight fascism by authoritarian means—advocating 'discipline' and 'fanaticism'—and was inspired by a strange mixture of Jacobin dictatorship and Nietzschean aristocracy. Cahun had apparently been attracted by Bataille's active pessimism and his attempt to combine Nietzsche and Marx, but in March 1936 she was among those who, with Breton, left the group, reaffirming that the struggle against fascism had to be conducted through the 'revolutionary traditions of the international labour movement'.

During 1936 Cahun took an active part in Surrealist initiatives—contributing photographs and uncanny sculptural objects to the movement's exhibitions in Paris and London, and signing collective denunciations of Franco's coup in Spain and the passivity of France's Popular Front government. It was all the more surprising, then, when she decided in July 1937 to leave Paris and set up home in Jersey with Malherbe. Cahun did not sever her connexions to the Surrealists—joining the International Federation for an Independent Revolutionary Art (FIARI), founded by Breton and Trotsky in 1938—but the movement was in any case dispersed by the outbreak of the Second World War.

With the German occupation of the Channel Islands in 1940 begins perhaps the most astonishing chapter of Cahun's political and intellectual life. After Malherbe talked her out of trying to assassinate the Wehrmacht's *Kommandant*, the couple decided instead to mount a campaign aimed at sowing discontent and inciting insubordination among the occupying forces. From 1941 to 1944, Cahun and Malherbe produced thousands of leaflets, posters and fliers containing anti-Nazi and anti-militarist slogans, uncensored information, songs, manifestos, theatrical dialogues, images and wordplays, with Malherbe translating Cahun's texts into German. Cahun also produced photomontages using images taken from the Nazi magazine *Signal*, but drawing on the antifascist works of John Heartfield. The texts—generally carbon-copied on Cahun's Underwood typewriter, though some were handwritten on cigarette cartons—were usually signed 'the Nameless Soldier', and were attached to walls, doors, barbed wire and parked cars, or hidden inside newspapers and magazines, or else left in letterboxes, churches and houses used by the occupying army.

Humour, allegory, absurdity and irony were the couple's main weapons in their unequal struggle against the most powerful war machine in Europe. It is enlightening to compare their truly internationalist texts with Aragon's 'patriotic' war-time poetry. 'We fought', Cahun was to write soon after the war, 'for a rainbow of values stretching from ultra-romantic black to the white-hot of iron. We fought for the Germans against Nazi Germany.' For four years Gestapo agents searched in vain for the 'Nameless Soldier', until Cahun and Malherbe were finally denounced—apparently by the shopkeeper who sold

them cigarettes. When the two were arrested on 25 July 1944, Cahun tried to save Malherbe by claiming sole responsibility, and defiantly emphasized her Jewish origins. Both were jailed, and immediately tried to commit suicide by swallowing the Gardenal pills they always kept with them for such an eventuality; the attempt failed, but their subsequent illness probably saved them from deportation to Germany.

The Gestapo could not at first believe that these two kindly middle-aged ladies were the firebrands behind all the subversive agitation; but when a search of their house turned up more of the same materials, a military court was convened, and Cahun and Malherbe were in short order sentenced to death as partisans, using what the prosecutor referred to as 'spiritual weapons more dangerous than guns'. They were supposed to be sent to Germany to be beheaded, but the liberation of France in the summer of 1944 meant that the Channel Islands were now cut off. The Occupation authorities saw that the war was lost and, fearing reprisals, offered to commute Cahun's and Malherbe's sentences to life imprisonment, provided they requested the pardon of the Third Reich. To the dismay of the *Kommandanten*, Cahun and Malherbe refused, and they were forced to sign the appeal themselves. On the last day of the war, 8 May 1945, Cahun and Malherbe were finally liberated, alive but in poor health.

After the war, Cahun remained in Jersey, but re-established contact with her Surrealist friends, corresponding with Breton and others. In June 1953 she took part in some Surrealist meetings in Paris, where she was reunited with Breton, Péret and Meret Oppenheim. She had been toying for some time with the idea of returning to live in Paris, and had finally decided to move back to Montparnasse when she died in Jersey on 8 December 1954.

Cahun never published anything about her resistance activities, but many of the details can be found in the autobiographical notebooks and long letters to friends she wrote subsequently, collected here. These documents also contain many illuminating remarks on her philosophical, political and social views, in a very personal and unconventional style: 'I'm an asocial rebel and a revolutionary dreamer,' she writes, 'and this does not fit any political party'; she cites as influences figures as diverse as Socrates, Buddha, da Vinci, Kropotkin and Havelock Ellis, and claims to have taken her method of thought from Heraclitus, Hegel and Marx. Elsewhere she provides a powerful endorsement of the partisan fighter that can be read at once as a homage to the French resistance and a polemic against the PCF: 'The partisan takes responsibility, without fetters or excuses, for the ends and the means, for the orders he gives himself, for the acts he accomplishes . . . here is the still-free human being. He who has given himself a mission cannot re-enlist.'

The deep sense of individual commitment, allied to an uncompromising insistence on personal freedom, seems typical of this complicated and courageous figure. The present selection gives us a better picture of the principles underpinning Cahun's interest in masks, mirrors and divided selves, which has often been viewed as a precursor to currently fashionable concerns with identity. For Cahun's personal and political radicalism makes it clear that she saw her destabilizations of the subject as part of a wider revolutionary project. Leperlier has performed a valuable and timely task in helping to trace her elliptical orbit within the dark constellation of Surrealism.

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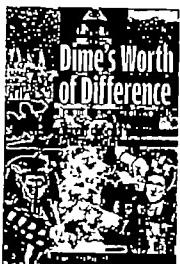
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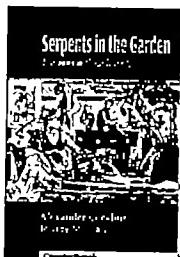
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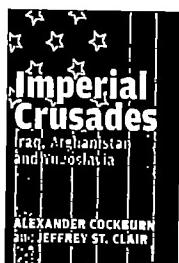
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Jacques Delors, *Mémoires*  
Plon: Paris 2004, €25, paperback  
511 pp, 2 259 19292 0

ALAN MILWARD

## DELORS AGONISTES

When the European Union speaks on international trade, the rest of the world adjusts its positions. It is the one subject on which the Union speaks with a single voice and the one arena of international relations wherein it has real power. The EU derives its leverage in this area from the fact that it is the world's biggest single market—a result of the changes it implemented after the summer of 1984. A sweeping advance in trade liberalization for both goods and invisibles, within the common market itself and with the world outside its frontiers, has established the EU with a greater share of world trade by value than the USA (if trade between EU member states is included). Increasing freedom of movement for workers, work-seekers and professional experts, together with relative freedom of capital flows—although far less, for people and capital, than inside the USA—have all contributed to this outcome. The establishment of a common currency for all but three of the member-states has created a firmer buttressing for these developments. The myth that it was possible to travel across mid-nineteenth-century Europe with only one currency is now becoming close to reality.

The combined effect of these changes was probably one of the primary causes of the increase in incomes and prosperity throughout most of the common market over the last twenty years. Their architect and inspirer was Jacques Delors, an official of the Bank of France turned politician, who became president of the European Commission in 1984, at the age of fifty-nine. When his three terms of office in Brussels finally ended in 1995, Delors turned down an invitation to be the Socialist Party candidate in the French presidential elections of that year, despite the indications of opinion polls that he would be elected. Delors will surely be judged the most able

president the European Commission has had, despite attempts by federalist scholars to bestow that accolade on the first incumbent, the rigid, dogmatically ideological and politically insensitive Walter Hallstein. Nevertheless, the uppermost emotion conveyed by his memoirs is regret that the changes which he forced through did not succeed in bringing about the regime of social justice for which he had laboured throughout his working life, and which he hoped would be an integral aspect of the new Europe.

Delors's political manhood coincided with France's post-war reconstruction. Born in 1925, he interrupted his further education to follow in his father's footsteps as a Bank of France official. It was perhaps the nearest thing to his desire to work in the post-war planning Commissariat and it was, indeed, to prove to be one way into that small but influential circle. As a middle-ranking Bank official, it was Delors's activities as a trade unionist in the Confederation of Christian Workers (CFTC) that led to his recruitment to the elite policy discussion group, the Economic and Social Council. In 1962, at the request of Jacques Chaban-Delmas, Delors was appointed as social policy adviser to Pierre Massé, the head of the Commissariat Général du Plan. He served as an adviser on social and then economic affairs to Chaban-Delmas when the latter became prime minister (1969–72). 'A New Society' was the slogan that had accompanied Chaban-Delmas's election campaign. That France's post-war reconstruction should include social change, engineered by government effort, as well as economic development was Delors's personal belief. That something similar, engineered by the new European institutions, should be the outcome of Europe's reconstruction, became his ambition. Although his career was to be one of international recognition and official triumph, his hopes for social justice were to be disappointed.

For this disappointment there were several reasons. One was the power structure of the national political parties, in which Delors held no secure base. His initial interest in the French version of a Christian Democratic Party, the MRP, lasted less than a year. Inside the European Community institutions it was the national parties that made the big decisions. For a combination of economic and political reasons the French Socialists, once in power, supported the Single European Act, the main instrument of European trade liberalization. But they also accepted that freer trade would be accompanied by the privatization of state-sector management, although this had no necessary inherent connexion to trade liberalization or to the freer movement of factors of production. Delors, for his part, would have preferred the Single European Act to have been accompanied by a policy which tempered the wind to those workers most affected by the loss of protectionist institutions.

One outcome of not providing such transitory protection was that trade unions, which Delors saw as an inherent aspect of a more just society, would be transformed into minor consultative institutions, largely regarded as barriers to productivity improvement. Another consequence was that working hours would increase in most EU countries—even in France, where the shorter working week had been an important political cause since the 1930s. Furthermore, those state-sector enterprises which Delors and his fellow planners of the 1950s and 1960s had seen as an indispensable part of the national infrastructure were now delegated to private agencies, whose losses had to be paid by taxpayers with no effective control over the services provided nor over the prices set for them.

All these trends were part of the ideology of the New Right, its hand enormously strengthened by the collapse of the Soviet bloc. It was above all in the central European countries, now member-states of the European Union or candidates to become so, that these changes were held to represent liberty. Debates in western Europe over the precise requirements of trade liberalization risked irrelevance, in face of such huge political changes in the East. Margaret Thatcher can legitimately claim as much credit for the Single European Act as Jacques Delors. The timing of Delors's appointment as President of the European Commission was not propitious for his views on social policy. The hard political facts of life within the European Community were that the ideology of the New Right was seen as 'freedom' by the former Soviet bloc. These facts were to be cruelly brought home to Delors during his time in Brussels.

But if the ideology of the radical Right was triumphant, what was the contribution of the Left? Had Delors any countervailing programme that could have brought comparable economic advance and income gain to Europe, but with the greater degree of social justice for which he strove? The question is inseparable from that of the role of parties and political power, even if it is also one about individual aspirations and ideological choices. Where did Delors stand in the mainstream of French political activity?

In the 1950s, when reconstruction planning was a more central aspect of French governance than it would become in the 1960s, Delors had regarded the political parties as being out of touch with France's real interests. Outside his trade-union activities, his political relationships were to small clubs of the kind that proliferated in France during that decade. The link between these (usually local) think-tanks and Delors's trade unionism was his Catholic conscience, applied to the task of modernizing the Church so that it could become a more relevant force for social reconstruction. In national politics this was almost a dead end. Christian Democracy never found a sure foothold in 1950s French political life. The first nationally prominent politician to whom Delors was attracted, Pierre Mendès-France,

stood outside the party system, although he did have ideas on social policy (most prominently, a campaign to make the French drink milk instead of alcohol). In 1958 Delors supported de Gaulle's coup and voted for him in his campaign to be elected president by direct suffrage. He supported, too, the new constitution of the Fifth Republic. The association with Chaban-Delmas, as a Gaullist with a social conscience, followed. Leadership seems to have been more important in these attachments than Catholicism, and the Catholic hierarchy more an obstacle than an ally.

Back in his old job after Chaban-Delmas lost office, and face to face with President Pompidou's conservative defence of France's traditional administrative machine, Delors's stance changed. He wanted to 'rediscover my family, the Left'. As in other European countries, by the late 1970s 'the Left', meaning the Socialist Party perhaps with some Communist support, was an empty phrase. At a time when the most accurate slogan for the PS would have been 'Enrichissez-vous', Delors wanted to persuade it to adopt an incomes policy, reform the welfare state to bring it more into line with Scandinavian systems, and deploy planning mechanisms for environmental protection and social health; the bundle of policies being a way of at least arresting what he saw as the depoliticization of French society.

Delors's rediscovered family found him useful. The Socialist Party was still in the process of unifying 'the Left'. François Mitterrand engineered an invitation to him to join the party in 1974, in spite of numerous objections. In 1979 Delors was elected, narrowly, to the European Parliament as a Socialist. In Mitterrand's victorious 1981 election campaign, his image was used in publicity posters to show how broad a church the reunited party had become. Delors was appointed Minister of Economy and Finance, although without the control over monetary policy for which he had asked. In government, he supported the nationalization of the major industrial groups, although he argued for only 51 per cent of each firm's capital to be nationalized, rather than the 100 per cent that occurred. He is still convinced that nationalizations improved performance.

Delors was an important enough figure to think through what his own terms would be for accepting the prime ministership. It did not come his way. In volume IV of their *La Décennie Mitterrand*—a work which is not always to be relied on—Favier and Martin-Roland perhaps capture why it did not. In his last interview with them, Mitterrand is reported as saying, 'Delors, I never believed for one second that he would become a candidate in 1995 . . . One can't be a Christian Democrat and wish to impose oneself on the French Socialists'. In 1983, the Socialists' policy swivelled through so many degrees that it was in flat contradiction to the programme of their first eighteen months of office. Delors's ideas had deeper roots,

but that was exactly the quality that made them less wanted; in 1984 he left for Brussels.

The question, however, is also whether those ideas were feasible, irrespective of the centre left's rootless search for power. The European Single Act, his most lasting memorial, remains, it seems, his favourite treaty, partly because it is short and says what it wanted to say, but also because it gave the European Commission:

a political tool which it needed, not only to put the internal market into place, but also to apply policies which would give the Community the aspect of a European model of society, a balance between market and regulation, a subtle dialectic between competition, cooperation and solidarity.

What does this mean? Delors's idea seems to be that the institutions of the European Community temper the effects of global neoliberalization. Did the goal of extending the Community's powers outweigh that of formulating the social-policy changes which would be part of the 'European model'? In refuting Thatcher's speech at Bruges in September 1988, which appeared to place absolute barriers to further extensions of Community powers after the completion of the Single European Act, Delors came up with another slogan for the Community: 'Equality, Majority and Dynamism'. 'Majority' was a key word because qualified majority voting in European Councils and Councils of Ministers offered the only chance of reaching enforceable decisions about harmonizing social policy within the Community as a whole, once the effects of the Single European Act were felt; although it was far from guaranteeing that national social policies would be aligned. The history of this attempt to create a 'European model' went back to Delors's ambitions as Minister of Finance in the Mitterrand government in 1981, when his guideline for action was 'No economic policy without social policy, no social policy without economic policy, and no economic policy without modernization'. Mitterrand may have wondered what the other ministers' functions were.

What were these social policies? Incomes policy, which Delors had thought of as a way forward for France, faded out of view at the European level. A 'Confederation of Nation-States', as Delors was prone to describe the European Community/European Union, was no arena for such an experiment. Instead, the policies which contributed to his model were related more immediately to the conditions of working life, those same issues which had interested him as a trade unionist. He hoped that, before leaving the Commission, he might win support from the employers' consultative bodies within the Brussels machinery for some form of legal charter of employees' rights, valid for the whole Community. But at a time when the ex-COMECON countries were lurching towards unfettered power for employers and low

wages for workers, his ideas held little attraction for western businesses and governments. After polite applause they were shelved.

They were followed, however, by the proposals that Delors inscribed into the Commission's 1993 'White Book'. Because trade globalization and technical progress eliminate jobs, he argued, re-education for work is necessary throughout the human lifespan. If this was to be achieved, the European model would have to be one of fewer hours of weekly work. Welfare regimes and pay structures would need to be changed, and presumably harmonized. All this needed a higher level of national spending on educational structures, presumably within a common European pattern. Part of this programme would have to include some further realignment of national taxation practices.

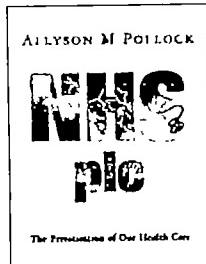
At a time when all national governments had to ensure that their public deficits stayed below a set level in order to qualify for membership of the Monetary Union, there was an inherent contradiction between what was required to establish the world's biggest single open market and what was needed to create a European model. Apart, therefore, from Delors's lack of roots and influence in the French Socialist Party, he was swimming against a tide of opinion on how western Europe should respond to the end of the Cold War. In eastern Europe, the Delors model was seen as narrowing hopes of a rapid step towards prosperity and creating a less attractive Europe. That an 'American model' was better regarded in Warsaw and elsewhere was, however, of less importance to the outcome than the question of whether, for the west, there could be any difference, outside the realm of political propaganda, between a European and an American model of capitalist society, particularly when the European Community had the USA as its main competitor and partner.

The reaction of the existing centre-left parties to European events from 1989 onwards reveals, above all else, the lack of any New Left which could match the appeal of the New Right. The New Left's anti-Americanism, particularly in France, was merely a substitute for thinking about society. This conclusion, of course, means that the issues raised by Delors, however partial, remain live; and, however limited, are neither false nor irrelevant. Arguments for making a wealthy and wealth-creating society a more humane one, no matter that 'the Left' does not take them seriously, are hard to refute. Whatever the political ordering of his motives, Delors had persistently sustained such arguments and, in his *Mémoires*, still does.

For all the evidence from the book's many photographs that Delors became more captivated by meetings with heads of states, and perhaps less interested in Catholic trade union discussion groups, he remained during his time in the Commission a decent and thoughtful politician, too interested in social policy perhaps for the company he was keeping. On balance,

he was probably right to be disillusioned by traditional party politics. But political parties were probably equally right in deciding that Delors had no winning ideas to sell to them. It seems typical of his intelligent diffidence that his *Mémoires* are not entirely his own, and that most chapters conclude with a brief interrogation of the author by the journalist Jean-Louis Arnaud. This does nothing to help the book along, but it does not weaken its impact as the long quandary of a man searching but failing to find some more hopeful and humane outcome from the enormous economic policy changes for which he was himself responsible, a shaper but not an admirer of his own times.

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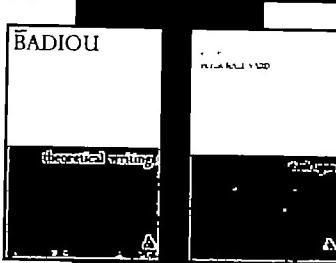
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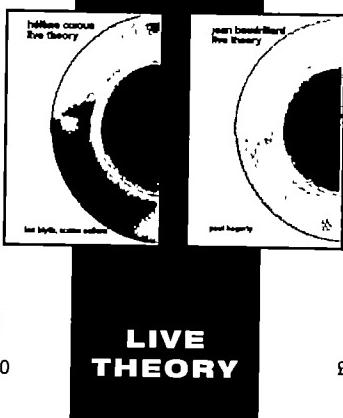


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Vivek Chibber, *Locked in Place: State-Building and Late Industrialization in India*

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334 pp, o 69109 659 7

ACHIN VANAIK

## MYTHS OF THE PERMIT RAJ

The unexpected Congress election victory in May 2004 has placed the Indian Left in a cleft stick. The outcome offers genuine reprieve from the nearly two-decades long seemingly inexorable forward march of the authoritarian Hindu Right, which after six years in power has already vitiated the secular and democratic characteristics of Indian society and was poised to do even more damage. To deepen the Right's current disarray the Left wants to avoid at all costs bringing down the governing Congress-led coalition before it completes its full five-year term. At the same time, the poll result expressed nationwide (particularly rural) unhappiness with the effects of the neoliberal turn—initiated in 1991 by Manmohan Singh, the new Congress Prime Minister, in his then capacity as Minister of Finance.

As before, Congress will continue to pursue what it now calls 'reforms with a human face'. Resolutely opposing this trajectory has become more important than ever—especially since, with inequalities of income, wealth and power growing, high poverty levels persisting and employment absorption even of educated youth declining, India could, like South America, well face major social turbulence some years down the line. If the Left and other progressive forces have not established their prior credibility as capable opponents of this policy, willing and able to pursue alternatives, it is the communalist Right that will be poised to exploit such upheavals. We are still far from writing any epitaphs for political Hindutva. This uncertain context lends additional political value to Vivek Chibber's outstanding study. For *Locked in Place* is a powerful assault on the intellectual assumptions, arguments and claims on which the prevailing neoliberal consensus in India rests.

Today's dominant discourse goes like this: India was in the first rank of post-colonial countries for its belief in, and pursuit of, the state-interventionist policy of Import Substitution Industrialization. But the end result was a relative failure, both in meeting the earlier goals set by Indian planners and vis-à-vis the 'miracle economies' of East Asia. In the two decades after 1947, the Indian industrialist class broadly supported this state-led project of ISI because it had an interest in a protected home market wherein businesses could grow; but also because it had no choice. The Congress had led one of the three great anti-colonial mass struggles (besides Vietnam and China) of the twentieth century. For all the party's links with Indian capital (and undeniable bourgeois character), its key leaders retained a level of mass support and credibility that made the Congress-controlled post-colonial state highly autonomous from, and considerably stronger than, the industrialist class. Given Nehru's socialist beliefs, the state basically had its way in carrying this project. Its weaknesses became evident even before Nehru's death in 1964. Its long crisis of 1965–80 was marked, despite the success of the Green Revolution in securing self-sufficiency in food-grains production, by low growth rates, high and persistent poverty levels, low industrial productivity and major foreign-exchange imbalances. History itself has now given a definitive verdict: for this general developmental failure, the Indian state with its illusions about socialism (witness the collapse of Communism), is principally to blame. Lessons for the future are clear: scrap development planning; progressively reduce state intervention; allow the private sector maximum freedom to raise resources (reduce corporate and income taxes) and to invest where, and in what, it wants; steadily liberalize internally and externally. The path India set upon in the 1980s—especially since the turn represented by Singh's 1991 'reforms'—is the best, indeed only, way forward.

It is this story that Chhibber's scholarly and scrupulously argued work effectively demolishes. Neoliberals believe there is only good and bad economic policy, where the former must be the establishment of real-life conditions that most closely approximate to the verities of textbook neoclassical economics. The state can help or hinder the creation of such conditions and also has some role in tackling the problem of externalities. But neoliberalism has no place whatsoever either for the view that there is a legitimate sub-discipline of 'development economics' or for the notion of a distinctive 'development state'. Since the East Asian countries of Japan, Taiwan and South Korea are the outstandingly successful postwar examples of late capitalist industrialization, and owe their success to having just such states, neoliberalism can offer no historically grounded explanation for what must be the key question for all poor countries—why and how does late industrialization take place? Why do some development states succeed and others not? Chhibber combines historical insights, institutional theories of the state, class analysis and empirical

evidence to explain precisely this issue through the contrasting experiences of Korea and India in the two decades after World War Two.

The state played a crucial role in promoting the late nineteenth-century industrialization of France, Germany, us. But only after 1945 did development planning emerge in (at its weakest) a form of a conscious industrial policy aimed at controlling private investment—directing where it should go, and then making sure of its efficient use. This planning for development had to address two areas. It needed to improve the general ‘environment’ in which firms function—raising the national savings rate and carrying out major land reforms, thereby increasing production of raw materials, providing wage goods for industry and broadening the domestic market. Though Chibber registers the importance of this aspect (about which more will be said later) the book is overwhelmingly preoccupied with the development state’s second function: that of directly influencing the industrial sector through micro-management of its behaviour. This requires the formulation and implementation of a sound industrial policy.

Industrial policy has two dimensions. Firstly, it requires subsidizing industry through the provision of infrastructure: cheap inputs, easy credit and domestic-market protection, thereby ensuring good rates of return. Developing the structures and state-class collaboration necessary for achieving this is no problem since this is the ‘giveaway’ aspect of the policy. It is establishing the appropriate patterns of private investment and production that is highly problematic, requiring effective monitoring and regulatory mechanisms that are tantamount to institutionalizing (for business) the disciplinary state. There must be structures to acquire and share necessary information between firms and between them and the state, carry out inter-firm coordination and provide a smoothly functioning system of incentives and sanctions. An effective development state must succeed in disciplining business. One necessary, if not sufficient, condition for doing this is to have a capitalist state that is substantially autonomous of the industrial class whose interests it aims to serve and promote.

The Korean state, says Chibber, was able to be more autonomous of its industrial class than was the Indian state in the crucial early decades after decolonization. Indeed, Indian industrialists prevented their state from putting into place such disciplinary structures. Though both countries inherited strong and capable bureaucracies not colonized by economic elites, only Korea could take the two steps necessary to install a disciplinary state. It created a nodal agency, the Economic Planning Board (EPB), which was a ‘factor of coherence’ amidst the administration’s multiple arms, functions, inclinations and vested interests, because it was sufficiently empowered to override the authority of other bodies as far as economic-industrial policy went. Moreover, the Korean state was ‘embedded’ in the business community. It

had institutionalized a dense network of ties with business that served as a two-way street for co-operation and bargaining to create and then sustain a 'shared project' between state and class. This was the vital complement to the disciplinary powers of the state. Korea's success sprung from this mutual 'pact' between state and class, not from the latter's merely disciplinary capacities.

Like so many other developing-world newcomers, Korea had to start off pursuing an import-substitution policy in order to build up its domestic industry behind protective barriers. But unlike others it did not merely seek the path of greater export promotion—India tried this with partial success after its 1957 foreign-exchange crisis—but successfully transited to a fully-fledged Export-Led Industrialization regime. Under an ELI regime (pursued by Japan, Taiwan, Korea) one cannot simply rely on comparatively low labour costs but must reach world standards of productivity, technical advance, marketing skills and so forth, which then enable movement up the export-value chain from light manufactures (textiles, toys) to heavy industrial goods (cars, shipbuilding, machine tools) and finally to electronics and other sophisticated capital and consumer goods. This has been the trajectory of the miracle East Asian economies.

After the shift to ELI by the Park Chung Hee dictatorship in the mid-sixties, Korean business had to accept state control; without it, it had no chance of acquiring the necessary productivity levels, market entries, capital inputs, subsidies, R&D and credit support that alone could ensure world-level competitiveness. If the first step was getting Korean capitalist preferences to change in favour of the ELI path, the second step was to ensure its early success and thereby the incentive to constantly reproduce it. ELI has obvious long-term productivity advantages over ISI, but it is also far more difficult. Chibber recognizes that matters of geography and luck—not to mention Cold War geopolitics—enabled Korea to establish an effective ELI development state, while very different circumstances not only denied India a realistic possibility of making any such shift but also determined the form taken by its own development failure. According to Chibber, Japan's decision to shift its own ELI strategy, from light manufacturing to the export of capital and heavy industrial goods, sent Japanese capital flooding into South Korea, mostly in the form of minority holdings in joint ventures with Korean firms in order to create an export platform, particularly to the US. Korea piggybacked on Japanese production technology in these areas and, more importantly, on Japan's already existing marketing outlets and skills in the US. Korea in turn became a major importer of Japan's heavy industrial products. Thus Korea did not first establish a development state and then pursue ELI but, through the pursuit of ELI, managed to produce such a state.

Chibber then turns to the question of why India failed to create a disciplinary state. He challenges what he calls one of the central historical

myths—that, on the eve of Independence, the most powerful corporate houses, speaking for their class, were supportive of development planning. He argues the opposite. Both before and in the aftermath of Independence, India's business class successfully blocked the installation of a proper structure of disciplinary planning, the necessary complement to the import-substitute strategy's subsidization of industry. The myth of the quiescent bourgeoisie casts the blame for subsequent failure on the state, when it should rest on the Indian capitalist class and what it did to prevent the emergence of an effective development state. The Bombay Plan of 1944, drawn up and signed by the top companies, endorsed the principle of a post-Independence planning regime and has canonical status as the text confirming a general corporate acceptance. Through original archival research, Chibber adduces evidence to persuasively argue that the Plan has been seriously misinterpreted. The industrialist class, including the key signatories of the Bombay Plan, had made their opposition to disciplinary planning abundantly clear in the 1939 Congress-instituted National Planning Committee and in the 'critical juncture' of 1947–51. How could they have behaved otherwise when, in anticipation of the wide spaces in the domestic market that would be vacated by departing British capital after 1947, the last thing they wanted was any restrictions on where and how they should invest?

The Bombay Plan expressed the recognition by Indian industrialists that some kind of planning process would take place after Independence, and that they needed to be in-house participants in order to ensure that it did not take directions dangerously antithetical to their interests. If mainstream Indian historiography has given undue weight to the Plan, Chibber may have bent the stick too far in the other direction by treating the 1944 agreement as an 'anomaly' that must be explained in purely contingent terms. He therefore places excessive importance on the Quit India mass movement of 1942, which petered out well before 1944 but is deemed to have struck deep fear in the industrial bourgeoisie who, seeing the spectre of socialist planning materialize before them, were desperate to project the need for a capitalist plan. But despite periods of mass upsurge, the basic relationship of forces between capital and labour was firmly tilted towards the former; its ties to the Congress were far stronger, and the Left, although leading the urban working class, was never really capable of displacing the mainstream Congress leadership. The Communist Party of India, obedient to Stalin's post-1941 wartime alliance with London, discredited itself by opposing the 1942 mobilization. One can easily share Chibber's iconoclastic opposition to conventional interpretations of the Bombay Plan while disagreeing with the way in which he has redistributed explanatory weight among the factors that contributed to its emergence. It is, nonetheless, a significant merit of the

book that it will likely force much more serious historical research into the whole issue of the relationship of state and class in this period.

After Independence, the Indian state's two key instruments for installing a disciplinary planning system were the Planning Commission and the Industries (Regulation and Development) Act, proposed in 1949 and passed in 1951. Because of class pressure both were scuppered at inception. The Planning Commission was transformed into a merely advisory body (unlike Korea's EPB), and the IRDA's powers were greatly diluted. Korea's sectoral business associations were staffed by senior government officials, which helped 'embed' the state within industry. Their Indian equivalents—the Development Councils and the Central Advisory Council for Industry, the key links between business and the state—were little more than talking shops. India never succeeded in installing a disciplinary development state. And British and US capital, unlike Japan's, did not help change Indian strategic orientations—they came in for the domestic market, not to set up an export platform.

*Contra* contemporary critiques, the real problem was never the presence of what is disparagingly called the 'licence, quota, permit, raj'. In both India and Korea, as Chhibber writes:

the industrial policy regime was characterized by a battery of administrative hurdles, red tape and government controls; in both cases the system favoured large over small and medium-sized firms. In Korea, however, the favours to the large firms were doled out consciously, with clear objectives and with the ability to monitor and, if necessary, discipline

In a later chapter, Chhibber explains why no successful reform in the direction of a better, more disciplinary state took place even after the 1957 balance-of-payments crisis. This would first have required changing capitalist preferences from ISI to exports, which did not happen. Reform from within the state was no longer an option—the existing planning dynamic served to strengthen capitalist power, further reducing state autonomy. The Planning Commission was already resented by various administrative circles for even its limited authority. Planning failure reinforced sentiments against the notion of planned development itself and the Commission began losing influence over policy formulation. Eventually this erosion from within would lead to a new generation of high-level bureaucrats who, disillusioned by the whole planning experience, would fall into the neoliberal trap of thinking that reform could not mean improving the quality of state intervention but only 'liberalization'—i.e., progressively doing away with such involvement. By the 1980s and 1990s new industrial interests, chafing at the restrictions which favoured established companies, were calling for deregulation, while both new and old businesses eyed with avarice the prospects of privatizing public-sector domains.

Today, pressure by Indian industrialists to combine internal liberalization with protection from FDI entry has effectively disintegrated. Surprisingly, Chibber's last pages, briefly covering contemporary developments, do not register this fact. Steady external liberalization is now the accepted common sense; only its pace and pattern is in dispute. In effect, very substantial sections of Indian capital now seem prepared to accept a future in which they will seek niches in the large Indian market, pursue outward expansion wherever they can and accept junior partnership with TNCs. Hitherto, India's dominant class coalition—the industrial and agrarian bourgeoisies, the apex of the bureaucracy—largely excluded any external bourgeois presence; it is now in transition to an as yet uncertain future. Neoliberal globalization may well confirm Nicos Poulantzas's prescient (1975) if then premature prediction in *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* of the emergence of, not comprador, but 'internal bourgeoisies' in various parts of the world.

These are issues to which Chibber does not pay due attention, though further elaboration along these lines would not challenge the basic thrust of his study. Nor does he assign much importance to the 'general environment', domestic or global, in which Indian and Korean states and industries operate. Also, while he repeatedly stresses the importance of tracking the shifting relationship of forces within the state, and between the state and the industrial class, shifts in power within the dominant class bloc do not enter the picture. Given India's weighty agrarian layer and the diverse patterns of regional development across its vast landmass, this is a real loss. Chibber rejects the thesis that the major land reform undertaken after the 1950–53 Korean war, by removing a class obstacle against rapid industrialization, decisively enhanced state autonomy in producing the developmental mechanisms that preceded export-led industrialization. He will only concede this as a necessary but not sufficient condition for a development state to emerge. The one counterfactual Chibber does not explore is what would have happened if Korea (and Japan and Taiwan) had not had such land reforms?

As for India, *Locked in Place* already builds a strong case for why a development state was not constructed. Was this outcome then over-determined by the absence of serious land reform, itself inconceivable given the overall relationship of class forces before and after 1947? Apart from the already-cited virtues, land reforms allow greater state concentration on the industrialist class whose power increases vis-à-vis declining rural elites. This eases or even eliminates populist pressures of the kind that the Indian state had to face in the 1970s and 1980s, leading it to make policy pay-offs to both rural and urban elites. By changing vertical power relations in the countryside, land reforms also greatly facilitate mass literacy, creating a more skilled labour force that contributes to rising industrial productivity, as well as preparing a wider domestic market for more sophisticated consumer goods. It

is not a coincidence that India has failed badly on the connected fronts of land reform and mass literacy.

Besides this crucial contrast between North East Asia and India, there is another difference never seriously broached by Chhibber. Chalmers Johnson is not the only writer to emphasize the decisive importance of us foreign policy for East Asia's economic trajectory. For much of the Cold War, East Asia was the geographical frontline in the battle against the two Communist giants (and the minnow, North Korea), with Japan, Taiwan and South Korea the proxy frontline states. In return for political fealty, the us government permitted unprecedented levels of access for these countries' exports, ignoring or finessing domestic unease and opposition. Thus the other side of the considerable autonomy that the authoritarian Korean state enjoyed internally, in regard to its capitalist class, was the absence of any autonomy in its foreign policy. The installation and sustenance of a development state based on export-led industrialization was not just a function of domestic social relations but of a global balance of force.

There is no way that India—given its size, the character and leadership of its national independence movement, and its split with a Pakistan keen to be roped into the Western side of the Cold War face-off—could ever have accepted similar foreign-policy subordination. This is a powerful though unmentioned reason why Chhibber, after exploring all reasonable counterfactual possibilities for the Indian development state, is correct to conclude that, all told, such a state could have at best pursued a more effective ISI strategy. In that respect, as he says, a serious comparative study of better performing ISI 'late developers' such as Brazil, Mexico and Turkey, alongside India, would be a major contribution, shedding further light on the possibilities and limits of disciplinary development planning for late industrialization. Till such time as someone takes up that task, we have every reason to be grateful for this path-breaking work.

# NEW LEFT REVIEW 30

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### TOM MERTES: A Republican Proletariat

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## SVEN LÜTTICKEN: After the Gods

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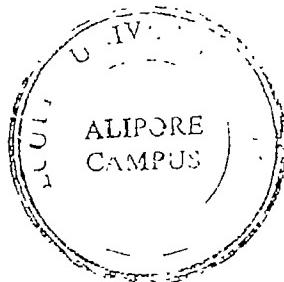
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TONY WOOD

*Editorial*



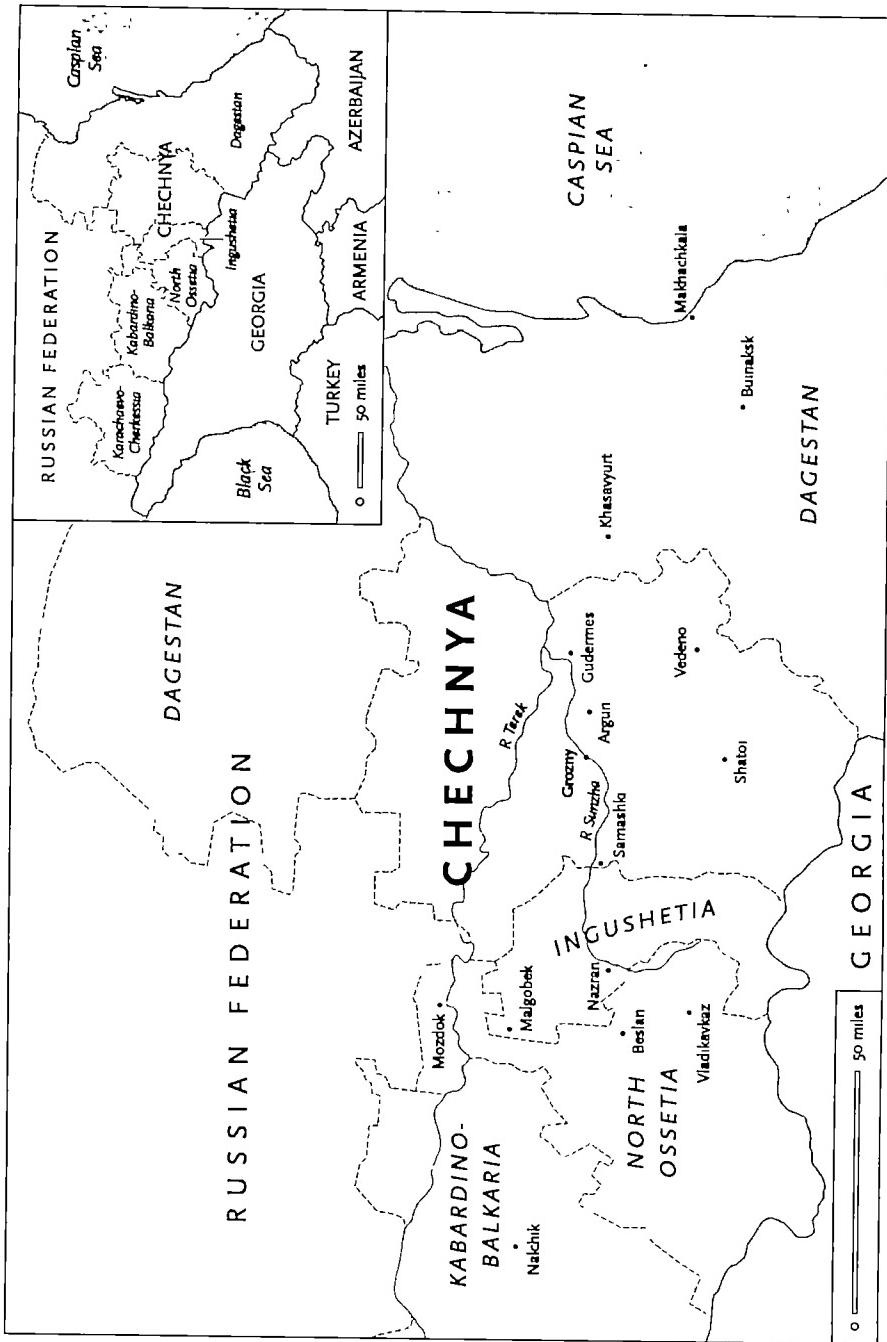
## THE CASE FOR CHECHNYA

What happened was what always happens when a state possessing great military strength enters into relations with primitive, small peoples living their independent lives. Either on the pretext of self-defence, even though any attacks are always provoked by the offences of the strong neighbour, or on the pretext of bringing civilization to a wild people, even though this wild people lives incomparably better and more peacefully than its civilizers . . . the servants of large military states commit all sorts of villainy against small nations, insisting that it is impossible to deal with them in any other way

Leo Tolstoy, 1902 draft of *Hadjî Murat*

**I**N THE DECADE and a half since the end of the Cold War, the map of Eastern Europe has been comprehensively redrawn. More than a dozen new countries have appeared as a result of the break-up of the Soviet Union and the Yugoslav wars of succession, an arc of newly sovereign states stretching from Estonia to Azerbaijan. The majority of them have, at the prompting of the US, been incorporated into Euro-Atlantic defence structures, and several were ushered into the EU earlier this year; Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania now form the outer perimeter of the Single Market, while Georgia and Ukraine have advanced their cases for NATO membership. The continent has been transformed.

Chechnya provides a stark contrast to these trajectories. Here, as in the Baltic states, a national independence movement emerged during *perestroika*, and a broad national consensus for secession was democratically ratified in late 1991. Earlier the same year the citizens of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania overwhelmingly voted for separation from the USSR; the results of the referenda were quickly approved by the USSR's Supreme Soviet and the three new nations, with populations of 1.6 million, 2.7 million and 3.7 million respectively, were admitted to the UN within a



matter of weeks. But Chechnya—at 15,000 square kilometres, slightly smaller than Wales, and with a population of around a million—has, since 1991, suffered two full-scale assaults by the world's fifth-largest military force, and is now entering the sixth year of a vicious occupation designed to reduce the populace to starvation and submission. While citizens of the Baltic states are now able to cross Europe's borders freely, Chechens must endure Russian checkpoints and *zachistki*—‘clean-up’ operations, ostensibly for checking identity papers—which routinely result in the torture, ransom, disappearance or summary execution of those arrested, as well as the pillaging and further impoverishment of those who remain. The devastation is unthinkable, the brutality endless and unchecked, while the casualties remain largely uncounted.

Discussions of the Russo-Chechen conflict have rarely focused on this staggering divergence of fortunes, often preferring the state-sponsored obfuscations of the ‘war on terror’, or else characterizing it as the all but inevitable product of a long-running historical antagonism. The legacy of Chechen resistance to Russian colonization—from the first confrontations with Cossack settlers in the sixteenth century to the southward expansion of the Tsarist Empire in the nineteenth century, and well into the Soviet period—has undoubtedly played a role in galvanizing the movement for secession. A strong impetus would also have come from the experience of deportation and exile suffered by several North Caucasian peoples in 1944. The immediate roots of the present war, meanwhile, can be found in the Kremlin’s cynical plan to hoist Putin into power, and to reverse the defeats suffered in 1994–96.

But underpinning Chechen resistance, past and present, has been a consistent struggle for self-determination. The Chechens’ demands are comparatively modest—full sovereignty, retaining economic and social ties with Russia—and have a sound constitutional basis. The response, however, has been staggeringly disproportionate, with Russian forces unleashing attacks of a ferocity unmatched in these lands since the Second World War. In the West, on the rare occasions that attention is devoted to Chechnya there has been almost total unanimity that Chechen independence is not to be countenanced, for the good of Russian democracy and its nascent capitalism. What follows is an attempt to demonstrate the weakness in fact, and shamefulness in principle, of the arguments used to deny the fundamental right of the Chechen people to govern themselves.

The Chechens are one of an intricate patchwork of peoples covering the North Caucasus.<sup>1</sup> ‘Chechen’ is in fact a Russian designation, after a village where a battle was fought between Cossack settlers and the local people in 1732; the Chechens—mythically descended, ‘like sparks from steel’, from the hero Turpaloo-Nokhchuo—refer to themselves as ‘Nokhchii’, and are closely related to the neighbouring Ingush, with whom they share many customs. The two peoples, whose languages are mutually intelligible, are jointly known as the Vainakh. They have been present in the area for over 6,000 years, their livelihood predominantly provided by livestock, subsistence farming and the surrounding forests. As with mountain peoples elsewhere, Chechen society lacked feudal structures, being composed instead of groupings of clans living in formal equality—‘free and equal like wolves’, as the Chechen saying has it. This essentially democratic, acephalous form of social organization distinguished the Chechens from many other Caucasian peoples, such as the Kabardins or Avars, and was to have far-reaching implications: firstly because it meant that there was no native elite whom the Tsars could co-opt; and secondly because the Chechens were in a sense already ideally organized for guerrilla warfare.

### *Frontier revolts*

The tradition of resistance to outside rule in Chechnya is striking in its depth and consistency. It has been stronger here than elsewhere due to a combination of factors: pre-existing social relations, cultural patterns, concrete historical experience and environmental conditions. Topography and demographics have been crucial: Chechnya’s thickly forested mountains provided better cover for resistance than was available in, say, Ingushetia; moreover, as the most numerous of the North Caucasian peoples, the Chechens provided the majority of footsoldiers for rebellions against Russian rule. Their record of struggle sets them apart from their neighbours, among whom both admiration and resentment of Chechens are common. It was above all the disparity between Chechen and Ingush experiences of and attitudes to Russian rule—the Ingush largely abstained

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed historical narrative see John Dunlop’s *Russia Confronts Chechnya: Roots of a Separatist Conflict*, Cambridge 1998, chapter 1. The classic account is John Baddeley’s *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus [1908]*, London 1999; see also Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power*, New Haven 1998. Lieven’s book, a compendium of fascinating information and acute insights, stands in marked contrast to his current commentary on Chechen affairs, characterized by an extraordinary degree of sympathy for Putin’s needs.

from the rebellions of 1840–59 and 1920—that lay behind Ingushetia's decision to separate from Chechnya in a 1991 referendum.

Resistance has been bolstered and perpetuated by Chechen culture in which, as elsewhere in the Caucasus, honour—both martial and familial—and hospitality are prominent. Memory plays a central role, not only in its oral traditions—notably the epic songs, *illi*—but also in the customary duty to remember seven generations of ancestors. History is no dispassionate record of events; it is the basis of Chechen identity itself.<sup>2</sup> Religion, too, has been an important element: Islam penetrated the East Caucasus in the 17th and 18th centuries, melding with local animist traditions. The Naqshbandi Sufi brotherhood, with its aversion to hierarchy and creed of resistance, held strong appeal for Chechens, and it was under Sufi leadership—uniting dozens of disparate Caucasian peoples behind the banner of Islamic solidarity—that the most effective resistance to Russian colonial domination was to be mobilized in the 19th century.<sup>3</sup>

Russia's southward expansion began with the conquest of the khanate of Astrakhan by Ivan the Terrible in 1552, and the first contacts between Chechens and Russians date from this time. But shifts in geopolitical fortunes and priorities meant that Russian imperial interest in the Caucasus revived only in the late 18th century—provoking the 1785–91 uprising of Sheikh Mansur, whose armies inflicted a heavy defeat on Catherine the Great. After the Napoleonic Wars, the Tsars began to colonize the region in earnest, constructing lines of forts along the Terek and Sunzha rivers, which laterally bisect Chechnya. Russia's colonial policy was similar to that adopted by other European powers in their dealings with tribal peoples; in the Caucasus it was personified by General Aleksei Yermolov, who from 1816 attempted to

<sup>2</sup> On Chechen culture's orientation to the past and the nature of its epics, see Obkhad Dzhambekov, 'O khudozhestvennom vremeni v ustno-poeticheskem nasledii chechentsev', in Kh. V. Turkaev, ed., *Kultura Chechni: Iстория и современные проблемы*, Moscow 2002, p. 71; see also the essays in the same volume by Z. I. Khasbulatova on etiquette and traditions of mutual assistance, and on traditional architecture by V. I. Markovin. On songs and music, see Iu. A. Aidaev, ed., *Chechentsy: История и современность*, Moscow 1996, pp. 297–305. On myths and legends, see *Skazki i legendy ingushiei i chechentsev*, compiled by A. O. Malsagov, Moscow 1983; English version printed in 1996 by the Folklore Society. Khassan Baiev's memoir *The Oath: A Surgeon Under Fire*, London 2003, also provides many insights into Chechen culture and everyday life under Soviet rule, as well as striking testimony of the two wars.

<sup>3</sup> See Lieven, *Tombstone*, pp. 359–63.

subdue Chechnya, where resistance was stiffest, by means of punitive raids on mountain villages, collective punishment, razing of houses and crops, deforestation, forced mass deportation, and settlement of Cossacks on lands vacated by Chechens. Not only did this approach dispossess and enrage an entire population, it also had longer-term sociological consequences. In his eagerness to drive the Chechens out of the agricultural lowlands and into the mountains where they would eventually starve, Yermolov blocked the formation of feudal and landowning structures in Chechen society, thus cementing the very clan-based order that had made resistance so effective.<sup>4</sup>

The Chechens initially responded to Yermolov's brutality with armed raids on Russian positions. But by the late 1830s resistance had coalesced around Imam Shamil, an Avar from Dagestan who advocated Islamic discipline in order to defend local ways—including the *adat* or customary laws—against the invader. Between 1840–59 Tsarist repression escalated into full-scale war against Shamil's proto-state.<sup>5</sup> The armies of Alexander II eventually won through sheer military might, but the persistent trouble on his empire's southern flank evidently persuaded the Tsar, in the aftermath of the Crimean War, to press on with the task his father had entrusted to Paskievich, Yermolov's successor, in 1829—the 'extermination of the recalcitrant'. Forced deportations of the Muslim peoples of the North Caucasus began in 1856 and continued until 1864; a total of 600,000, including 100,000 Chechens, were sent to the Ottoman Empire, where tens of thousands perished from starvation and disease. The Cherkess have never recovered demographically; most of the Chechens who survived, however, eventually returned, though many remained to form significant diaspora communities in present-day Turkey and Jordan.

Rebellion flared up in Chechnya and Dagestan in 1877–78, this time mobilized primarily by Qadiri Sufi brotherhoods, and was once again

<sup>4</sup> M. M. Bliev and V. V. Degoev, *Kavkazskaya voyna*, Moscow 1994, cited in Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 16. Yermolov's portrait currently hangs in the Russian Army's North Caucasus headquarters in Rostov-on-Don: see Dmitri Trenin and Aleksei Malashenko, *Russia's Restless Frontier: The Chechnya Factor in Post-Soviet Russia*, Washington, DC 2004, p. 139.

<sup>5</sup> For a scholarly account, see Moshe Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnya and Daghestan*, London 1994; a striking literary vision of both the rebellion and its imperial adversaries can be found in Leo Tolstoy's last work, *Hadjī Murat*, published only in 1912. Tolstoy served in Chechnya from May 1851 to January 1854, at the height of the war.

brutally suppressed. A relatively quiescent period followed, in which the Chechens remained on the socio-economic margins, and subject to still more severe land hunger than Russian peasants—by 1912, Chechens and Ingush owned less than half as much land per person as Terek Cossacks.<sup>6</sup> The discovery of oil near Grozny in the 1880s brought with it rapid industrial and urban growth, but what meagre benefits this provided went above all to Russian migrant workers; indeed, Grozny remained a strongly Russian city well into the 1970s. As the Empire sought dependable local cadres, however, a small minority of Chechens began to receive a Russian education. It was from among these men, influenced by the ideas of the *narodniki* and later the Social-Democrats, that a local intelligentsia began to emerge in the late 19th century; initially focused on recording the folklore and traditions of their people in scholarly works, by the first decade of the 20th century they had moved to writing critical articles on the current conjuncture.<sup>7</sup> Several such figures were involved in the creation of an independent North Caucasian Mountain Republic in 1918, while others fought alongside the Reds during the Civil War as the best means of securing local autonomy. (Among them was Aslanbek Sheripov, whose brother Mairbek was to lead an uprising against Stalin in 1940.) Nevertheless, by the end of the Tsarist era, there was as yet no distinct Chechen nationalism; aspirations to sovereignty were instead couched in pan-Caucasian terms.

### *Revolution to deportation*

The leading role played by Cossacks in the White Army, which moved into the North Caucasus in 1919, galvanized opposition in Chechnya. Mobilized by Sufi brotherhoods in the countryside and by radicals such as Sheripov in Grozny—which survived a 100-day White onslaught in 1918—the resistance engaged fully a third of Denikin's forces at a crucial moment in the Civil War.<sup>8</sup> After the White withdrawal in 1920, however, the Red Army initially replicated the pattern of punitive raids, and resistance continued. By 1921 Stalin was forced to pledge full autonomy for the rechristened Soviet Mountain Republic, accept local Islamic laws

<sup>6</sup> 5.8 and 3 desiatinas respectively, to the Cossacks' 13.6 (1 desiatina = 1.09 hectares). See Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 33.

<sup>7</sup> Kh. V. Turkaev, 'Rossiya i Chechnya: aspekty istoriko-kul'turnykh vzaimosviazei do 1917g.', in Turkaev, *Kul'tura Chechni*, pp. 164–87.

<sup>8</sup> Abdurahman Avtorkhanov, 'The Chechens and the Ingush During the Soviet Period and Its Antecedents', in Marie Bennigsen Broxup, ed., *The North Caucasus Barrier*, New York 1992, pp. 147–94.

and return lands granted to the Cossacks. Within a year the Soviets had reneged on these promises, sending in army detachments to forcibly disarm the Chechens in the highlands; further pacification measures were required into the summer of 1925, including artillery and aerial bombardment of mountain villages.

Yet although many Chechens saw Soviet rule as Russian domination refurbished, others were better disposed to the Communist order, seeing it as Chechnya's path to modernity. Much of this ambiguity persists to this day, since the Soviet system provided professional opportunities and social infrastructure that the patriarchal order had never offered. In the field of culture, Chechen writers turned away from the Arabic poetic traditions of preceding centuries towards realist fiction in the manner of Gorky; it was the playwright and novelist Khalid Oshaev who devised the Latin transcription for Chechen in 1925—anticipating Atatürk by three years.<sup>9</sup> By the late 30s, however, modernization had become unambiguously synonymous with Russification. This was expressed on a symbolic level with an enforced shift to Cyrillic script, and in a literal sense with adjustments to administrative boundaries designed to dilute the weights of the titular nationalities of the newly formed Caucasian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics, merging distinct groups and adding to them areas with predominantly Russian populations.<sup>10</sup>

As elsewhere in the USSR, the onset of collectivization in Chechnya in the autumn of 1929 marked the beginning of a qualitatively different phase of Soviet history. In response to arbitrary arrests and confiscations of livestock, armed resistance began once more: archives were burnt and dozens of GPU agents assassinated, prompting the despatch of the Red Army to Checheno-Ingushetia that December. It suffered heavy losses, and the Kremlin line was softened until 1931, when the GPU arrested 35,000 Chechens and Ingush for 'anti-Soviet' activity. The following year saw the beginning of a crackdown on the local intelligentsia, though the 3,000 arrests of 1932 were outdone by the 14,000—3 per cent of

<sup>9</sup> Aidaev, *Chechentsy*, pp. 287–90.

<sup>10</sup> Perhaps the most lasting effect of Russification has come from Chechen not being taught in Soviet schools though 98 per cent of Chechens claim it as their mother-tongue, Chechen remains largely a spoken language; to this day, the overwhelming majority of publications in Chechnya are in Russian. For a survey of Chechen media, see Valerii Tishkov, *Obshchestvo v vooruzhennom konflikte: Etnografija chechenskoj vojny*, Moscow 2001, pp. 453–55, an abridged English version has been published as *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society*, Berkeley, CA 2004.

the population—that took place during the *ezhovshchina* of 1937; guerrilla activity continued in Chechnya's mountainous south, however, until 1938. An indirect indication of the toll taken by arrests and repression can be seen in the fact that, between the Soviet censuses of 1937 and 1939, Checheno-Ingushetia suffered a population loss of 35,000.<sup>11</sup>

But the depredations of the GPU pale into insignificance beside the genocidal deportations of 1944. If the former were tragically generalized across the USSR, the latter were chillingly focused. The pretext given by the Soviet authorities was that several North Caucasian peoples and the Crimean Tatars had collaborated en masse with the Nazi occupying forces. Chechen émigré circles—including the grandson of Shamil—had briefly made contact with the German authorities. But in Chechnya itself, opportunities for working with the enemy were limited: having taken Rostov, Stavropol, Krasnodar and Mozdok by late August 1942, the Wehrmacht ground to a halt before reaching Grozny; the only town in Checheno-Ingushetia over which they managed to establish control before their retreat began in late 1942 was Malgobek, which had a predominantly Russian population.<sup>12</sup> In Chechnya as elsewhere, the handfuls of collaborators were overwhelmingly outweighed by the number of Caucasians and Tatars volunteering for service in the Red Army—17,413 Chechens alone—or fighting with partisan bands behind German lines.

The real motivation undoubtedly lies instead in the obstinate refusal of the majority of Chechens, above all, to bow to Soviet authority. It was this that underpinned the nationalist insurrection led by Hassan Israilov and Mairbek Sheripov, which began in 1940—when Hitler and Stalin were officially allies—and which had, by 1942, gained control of several mountain regions and formed a provisional government.<sup>13</sup> Rather than being

<sup>11</sup> Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and Ingush', Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, pp. 49–56.

<sup>12</sup> See Aleksandr Nekrich, *The Punished Peoples*, New York 1978, pp. 36–8.

<sup>13</sup> Born in 1910, a Party member from 1929, Israilov was twice arrested for criticizing in print the 'plundering of Chechnya by the local Soviet and party leadership'. In January 1940, he wrote to the Chechen-Ingush ASSR Party secretary that 'For twenty years now, the Soviet authorities have been fighting my people, aiming to destroy them group by group; first the *kulaks*, then the mullahs and the 'bandits', then the bourgeois nationalists. I am sure now that the real object of this war is the annihilation of our nation as a whole. That is why I have decided to assume the leadership of my people in their struggle for liberation.' See Avtorkhanov, 'Chechens and Ingush', pp. 181–2. Dunlop highlights Israilov's unprecedentedly secular background for a Chechen resistance leader: *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, pp. 56–8.

deployed against Hitler's armies, the Soviet air force pounded the mountain *auls* in a bid to crush the North Caucasian National Committee.

The plan for the deportation was drawn up in October 1943, codenamed 'Operation Lentil'—the first two syllables of the Russian word *chechovitsa* pointing a phonetic finger at the principal targets. On 23 February 1944, in a process personally supervised by Beria, 478,000 Chechens and Ingush were crammed into Studebaker trucks and then sent, along with 50,000 Balkars, to Central Asia in airless freight trains; Kalmyks and Karachais suffered a similar fate. Food was scarce, disease rife, and many simply died of exposure. NKVD files give an official death rate of 23.7 per cent in the trains, a total of 144,704 people. Estimates for indirect population loss among Chechens alone range from 170,000 to 200,000.<sup>14</sup>

### *Return from exile*

Although the Israilov rebellion had provided a brief glimpse of a modern Chechen nationalism, the latter was largely forged by the experience of deportation and exile. The brutal specificity of Soviet nationalities policy and the sense of a shared, bitter destiny aided the formation of a Chechen national consciousness. The Sufi brotherhoods played a key role in exile, too, since their underground activities perpetuated a specifically Chechen religious tradition. Though Islam was to re-emerge during *perestroika*, there is little doubt that in Chechnya, religion served as 'spiritual clothing for [a] national struggle'.<sup>15</sup>

In exile, the surviving Chechens and Ingush faced strict restrictions on residence and were mostly able to work only as manual labour. With de-Stalinization in the late 1950s they began to stream back to the re-established Chechen-Ingush ASSR. But even after their return, they were heavily discriminated against, and largely excluded from skilled employment—a marginalization that only consolidated the national identification that had begun to develop in exile. In the late Soviet period, Checheno-Ingushetia's economy was divided into two spheres. The largely urban Russians—24 per cent of the republic's total 1989 population of 1.2 million—dominated the oil and machine sectors, health, education and social services. The predominantly rural Chechens and Ingush—the former far more numerous than the latter, composing 64

<sup>14</sup> Nekrich, *Punished Peoples*, p. 138; Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, pp. 62–70.

<sup>15</sup> Lieven, *Tombstone*, p. 357.

per cent of the ASSR's population—worked in agriculture, construction and also crime. Given the higher population growth rate of Chechens and Ingush relative to Russians, by 1989 these imbalances had resulted in an estimated surplus labour force of over 100,000, while a quarter of ethnic Chechens were now living outside Checheno-Ingushetia, having left in search of employment. Like the rest of the North Caucasus, moreover, Checheno-Ingushetia had markedly lower wages and poorer social provision than the rest of Soviet Russia: the average wage in 1985 was 83 per cent of the RSFSR average, dropping to 75 in 1991; infant mortality was 23 per 1000 in 1987, compared to an RSFSR mean of 14 per 1000. In 1989, only 5 per cent of the population of Checheno-Ingushetia had higher education, while 16 per cent had no education at all.<sup>16</sup>

The brunt of this economic apartheid was, of course, borne by the rural population—according to the 1989 census, 59 per cent in Checheno-Ingushetia, compared to 27 per cent in the RSFSR as a whole—and it was above all from the poor south of the republic that the independence movement drew its numerical support. By the end of the Soviet era, Chechnya's small intelligentsia—largely the product of the Communist system—was also pressing for, at the very least, a revision of the terms of Chechnya's USSR membership. Indeed, as elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the leaders of the nationalist movement came not from the political elite, but from local artistic and intellectual circles—the poet Zelimkhan Yandarbiev and the actor Akhmed Zakaev, for instance—although some, such as Dzhokhar Dudaev and Aslan Maskhadov, were drawn from the Red Army, one of relatively few Soviet institutions open to Chechen talents. Financial support, meanwhile, came from local bosses such as Yaragi Mamadaev or the Moscow-based diaspora—much more numerous and prosperous than overseas Chechen communities, which have had little influence on present conditions in their ancestral land.

A crucial factor in 1990–91 was the fact that, unlike the vast majority of Russia's titular ethnic republics, Chechnya possessed no native *nomenklatura* which could seamlessly retain power. The reasons for this are the same as those underpinning the emergence of Chechen nationalism itself. The GPU had picked off pre-Revolutionary leaders and intellectuals; but it was above all the deportation and subsequent discrimination that had 'prevented the Chechens from forming a consolidated, self-confident

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<sup>16</sup> Demographic information: Tishkov, *Obshchestvo*, p. 115, socio-economic data: Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, pp. 85–8.

Soviet elite that could have peacefully resolved the situation when the Soviet Union started to fall apart'.<sup>17</sup>

### *Declaration of independence*

As in the Baltic States, the origins of the Chechen national movement lie in informal associations established during *perestroika*, such as the scholarly society Kavkaz, Bart ('Unity')—which in 1990 became the Vainakh Democratic Party—and the Popular Front of Checheno-Ingushetia. The latter was closely connected to the local Party and KGB, and initially limited itself to organizing protests on environmental issues, such as a planned chemical plant in Gudermes, or on the defence of Chechen culture (the Ingush were largely sidelined). But the notion of full sovereignty became increasingly central to discussions during 1990, and more radical forces gained the upper hand. On 26 April, Gorbachev promulgated a law giving all Russian ASSRs 'the full plenitude of state power on their territory', and making them full subjects of the USSR, with the constitutional right to secede from the Union. On a visit to Kazan in August 1990 while campaigning for the RSFSR presidency, meanwhile, Yeltsin famously told Russia's ethnic republics to 'take as much sovereignty as you can stomach'. The First Chechen National Congress, held in November 1990 with the full approval of the local CP, took up these invitations by declaring the sovereignty of the Chechen Republic of Nokhchi-cho, but also resolved that the new state would remain part of the USSR.

At this stage, the chief differences among Checheno-Ingushetia's political forces concerned the composition of a new national leadership, the form of relations with Moscow and the role of Islam. All the main factions of the Chechen National Congress—the Communists; a secular group drawn from the Soviet intelligentsia and the Popular Front; radical Chechen nationalists, such as the Vainakh Democratic Party, many of whose members favoured some form of Islamic state—advocated full sovereignty 'at a minimum'.<sup>18</sup> It was only in 1991, as the Soviet Union neared collapse, that this consensus was broken, as the local Party clung to power while the nationalist opposition gathered force. The key actors here were the Vainakh Democratic Party, led by Zelimkhan Yandarbiev, and the Executive Committee of the Chechen National Congress, which was from March 1991 headed by Dzhokhar Dudaev.

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<sup>17</sup> Trenin and Malashenko, *Restless Frontier*, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 93; Lieven, *Tombstone*, pp. 56–64.

For the previous five years, Dudaev had commanded a long-range bomber division in Tartu, and was strongly influenced by the rising fortunes of the Estonian independence movement. He had left Estonia just as a referendum there returned a strong majority in favour of secession—an event which doubtless encouraged him to embolden his stance: Estonia's population of 1.6 million was, after all, little larger than Checheno-Ingushetia's, and the latter had a smaller Russian minority than either Estonia or Latvia. Dudaev's arrival in Chechnya brought a radicalization of the Executive Committee, which soon created an armed National Guard and by the summer of 1991 was openly calling for the dissolution of the Chechen-Ingush Supreme Soviet, claiming legitimate authority now rested with the National Congress.

The decisive blow to the local Party's authority came with the August putsch against Gorbachev. While Chechnya's CP officials avoided taking a decisive stance, Dudaev's Executive Committee staged rallies and called a general strike in defence of Yeltsin. A classic revolutionary situation of dual power ensued, until the seizure of the Supreme Soviet on 6 September by the National Guard and the paramilitaries of Bislan Gantemirov's Islamic Path Party.<sup>19</sup> With hundreds of people streaming into Grozny from the Chechen countryside in support of Dudaev, the nationalists took control of more government buildings during September. The Executive Committee's response to Yeltsin's proposal of a Provisional Council to replace the Supreme Soviet, a compromise more palatable to the local CP, was to form an interim government and schedule elections for 27 October. Dudaev won a landslide victory, and declared independence on his inauguration on 1 November.<sup>20</sup> At the end of the same month, the Ingush voted formally to separate from Chechnya, and remain part of Russia as an ASSR.

<sup>19</sup> The former used car dealer Gantemirov became mayor of Grozny under Dudaev, then went over to the opposition and served in the same post for Russia's puppet administration during the 1994–96 war; he was jailed for fraud in 1996, but amnestied by Putin in 1999 and put at the head of an armed group.

<sup>20</sup> Despite the many irregularities, and although experts have given different final figures—Dudaev winning 90 per cent of the vote on a 72 per cent turnout, or 85 per cent on a 77 per cent turnout—the verdict is clear. The Russian Caucasus expert Sergei Arutiunov has noted that Dudaev had 60–70 per cent support. See 'Chronology' in Diane Curran, Fiona Hill and Elena Kostritsyna, eds, *The Search for Peace in Chechnya: A Sourcebook 1994–1996*, Kennedy School of Government, Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project, March 1997; and Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 114.

Dudaev's declaration of independence was the latest in a series that had begun in Lithuania in March 1990. Armenia followed in August, Georgia in April 1991, and 20–31 August 1991 saw similar declarations from Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan; Tajikistan followed suit in September, Turkmenistan in October and Kazakhstan in December. The contrast between the fate of these states and Chechnya is striking. On 6 September, for example, the Kremlin recognized the independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and on 17 September the three nations were given seats in the UN; Ukraine and Belarus were already members, but the rest of the former Soviet republics were admitted on 2 March 1992 (except Georgia, which had to wait until July for lack of a government). On 2 November 1991, meanwhile, the RSFSR Supreme Soviet declared the elections Dudaev had just won to have been unlawful. Then, on the night of 8–9 November, Russian special forces flew in to Khankala airbase near Grozny in a bid to remove Dudaev from power. But the coup attempt was foiled by a combination of armed Chechen opposition and obstruction from Gorbachev, still nominally commander of the Soviet military, and unwilling to repeat the bloodshed that had taken place in Lithuania that January. Russian troops left Chechnya in humiliation, and for the next three years, the country gained de facto independence.

Chechnya's secession was in line with USSR law, and the margin of Dudaev's electoral victory indicated the depth of popular support for full sovereignty. Moreover, for all the doubts they subsequently raised as to its legitimacy, the Russian authorities on several occasions accepted Chechen independence *de jure*. On 14 March 1992, after negotiations on a range of legal, economic and security issues, Chechen and Russian representatives signed protocols explicitly referring to the 'political independence and state sovereignty of the Chechen Republic', a formula that was endorsed in further documents signed on 28 May and 25 September of that year.<sup>21</sup>

### *Dudaev in power*

Dudaev's Chechnya has been portrayed as a lawless land, blighted by crime, corruption and political and economic instability, with the blame placed squarely on its uniformed leader. Comparison with other former Soviet republics yields a more balanced assessment. In the years

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<sup>21</sup> Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 169.

immediately following 1991, economic disaster overtook all post-Soviet states. Perhaps the most comparable to Chechnya are the republics of Transcaucasia, which saw abrupt shrinkages of GDP—35 per cent in Azerbaijan in 1991–92 and 23 per cent in 1992–93; 40 and 32 per cent respectively in Georgia, 52 and 15 in Armenia—as well as a marked decrease in industrial production: the 1992 figures for Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan are 44, 48 and 24 per cent respectively. In Chechnya, industrial production dropped by 30 per cent in 1992 and by 61 per cent in 1993—principally due to the emigration in the early 1990s of the predominantly Russian specialists in the oil industry, the republic's main source of revenue.<sup>22</sup> Though the Dudaev government was undoubtedly inexperienced in economic affairs, Chechnya's woes were clearly part of a wider catastrophic trend.

If Chechnya's contested political scene stands in marked contrast to the *nomenklatura* dictatorships of Central Asia or Azerbaijan, it more closely resembles the turbulent landscape of post-Soviet Georgia, where president Zviad Gamsakhurdia was toppled by military coup in 1992 and assassinated in 1993. Political opposition to Dudaev came initially from former Party officials and pro-Moscow Chechens in the lowlands, but was soon augmented by business elites dissatisfied with the slump in economic fortunes after 1991 (and by the Dudaev government's unwillingness to privatize with the same gusto as the federal centre). As it did in Georgia, Yeltsin's government proceeded to finance and arm opposition groups, which made several attempts to assassinate Dudaev.

Dudaev responded to these pressures with populist gestures to the poorer, more traditional south—such as the 1994 renaming of Chechnya as the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, after a highland region—and, increasingly as of 1993, by a strengthening of presidential rule. Dudaev's dissolution of parliament in April 1993 tarnishes his democratic credentials—though he did not go so far as to shell his elected opponents into submission, as Yeltsin did in October of the same year. It should also be recalled that, unlike Aleksandr Rutskoi and Ruslan Khasbulatov, the leaders of the rebellion against Yeltsin, the Chechen opposition was actively being funded by an aggressive foreign power, with the aim of revoking Chechen sovereignty altogether. Moreover, several of the pro-Moscow districts claiming to be victims of Dudaev's dictatorship unilaterally declared

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<sup>22</sup> Transcaucasia: World Bank, *Statistical Handbook 1995: States of the Former USSR*, Washington, DC 1995; Chechnya: Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, pp. 126.

their secession from Chechnya in June 1993, with no democratic mandate whatsoever. It was this constitutional disorder, which Russia had itself created, that served as the pretext for invasion in 1994.

Much has been written about the prevalence of crime under Dudaev.<sup>23</sup> Chechens had become prominent in the shadow economy in the late Soviet period, largely due to their exclusion from legitimate sectors. But in Chechnya as elsewhere, the surge in criminal activities after 1991 is intimately bound up with the post-Soviet economic collapse. Against a background of catastrophic de-industrialization and skyrocketing inflation, crime became 'a matter of simple survival'. Highly profitable rackets sprang up around the Baku–Novorossiisk pipeline, which then ran across the heart of Chechnya, and Grozny airport became a kind of special free trade zone for drugs and contraband. Two remarks are in order here: firstly, these activities would not have been possible without the complicity of the Russian authorities controlling Chechen airspace and manning the border; and secondly, these larcenous de facto privatizations were simply small-scale versions of the orgy of theft then taking place in Russia itself. The Chechens were very much the 'junior partners in a wave of corruption and criminality emanating from the Russian capital'.<sup>24</sup>

### *Yeltsin's Vietnam*

The Russian authorities had clearly been contemplating military intervention in Chechnya long before 1994: Rutskoi had advocated it in October 1991, and military stand-offs had taken place on Chechnya's borders twice in 1992. The immediate trigger for war, however, was the failure of yet another special forces coup attempt in Chechnya on 26 November 1994, which has been described as 'Yeltsin's equivalent of the Bay of Pigs'.<sup>25</sup> Russian forces entered Chechnya on 11 December, and throughout that month Grozny came under a bombardment described as more intense than that in Sarajevo or Beirut. With the New Year came

<sup>23</sup> Several of Dudaev's key supporters in 1990–91 did have underworld connections—notably Gantemirov and the 'businessman' Yusup Soslambekov, who had served a sentence for rape in the Soviet period. Mamadaev is also alleged to have had mafia links. See Lieven, *Tombstone*, p. 59.

<sup>24</sup> See Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, pp. 127–33, on the involvement in oil rackets of figures such as Aleksandr Korzhakov, chief of Yeltsin's bodyguard, and Oleg Soskovets, first deputy prime minister—later key members of the 'party of war'.

<sup>25</sup> Trenin and Malashenko, *Restless Frontier*, p. 21, on Rutskoi and stand-offs, see Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 110, 172–4.

a full-scale ground assault, with the Russians taking Grozny in March amid heavy casualties, almost totally destroying the city's centre. The pattern of massively disproportionate force was repeated elsewhere—most brutally with the massacre of at least two hundred villagers in Samashki on 6–8 April 1995—but the Russian advance slowed in the spring of 1995, as the occupying army increasingly sought local truces rather than engaging Chechen formations. Shamil Basaev's May 1995 raid on Budennovsk, and the ensuing negotiations, provided a vital breathing space for the Chechen resistance, which was now able to filter back behind Russian lines in sufficient numbers to seize key towns—holding Gudermes for several days in December 1995.

From the outset, there had been a striking degree of opposition to the war not only among the Russian public, where a small but persistent anti-war movement took root, but within the army itself. As early as 13 December 1994, a tank column had refused to fire on a group of women blocking the road into Chechnya. The high number of Russian casualties contributed to low morale, and the notion of withdrawal from Chechnya became increasingly popular. In the spring of 1996, with electoral disaster looming and the Chechen resistance making bold, large-scale attacks, Yeltsin put forward a tokenistic peace initiative, but then ordered the assassination of Dudaev, carried out by Russian rocket attack on 22 April 1996. Yandarbiev took over as acting president. Thereafter, the Russians alternately proposed ceasefires and renewed their offensive, most notably after Yeltsin had scraped home in the June elections—a victory due in no small part to the massive political and monetary support of the West, orchestrated primarily by the Clinton administration.<sup>26</sup>

The decisive spur for negotiations came after a Chechen offensive on Grozny, Gudermes and Argun—launched to coincide with Yeltsin's inauguration on 9 August—had driven the Russians back to their positions of December 1994. On 31 August General Aleksandr Lebed and Chechen Chief of Staff Aslan Maskhadov signed the Khasavyurt accords, which recognized Chechnya as a subject of international law but postponed a final decision on its status until the end of 2001. The first Russo-Chechen

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<sup>26</sup> In February 1996 Helmut Kohl extended \$2.7bn credit to the Russian government, most of it unconditional; Alain Juppé stumped up a \$392m loan; in March, the IMF approved a \$10.3bn credit—making it clear that funds would be withdrawn if Yeltsin lost—and the World Bank agreed a loan of \$200m. See Fred Weir, 'Betting on Boris: The West Ups the Ante for the Russian Elections', *Covert Action Quarterly*, Summer 1996.

war was a humiliating defeat for the Russians and, despite their victory, a cataclysm for the Chechens. Conservative estimates give 7,500 Russian military casualties, 4,000 Chechen combatants and no less than 35,000 civilians—a minimum total of 46,500; others have cited figures in the range 80,000 to 100,000.<sup>27</sup>

### *Imaginary dominos*

The principal argument advanced in defence of Yeltsin's assault on Chechnya was that Chechen independence would unleash a chain of separatist wars in the rest of Russia—an internal version of the Cold War trope of a 'domino effect'. It rests on precarious foundations. As Robert Wade has recently written in the *Financial Times*, the likelihood of secession increases 'the more that three conditions are met: location on a non-Russia border; population with non-Russian majority; a plausible export revenue base'. To take the second of these, demography: of the RSFSR's 31 titular ethnic republics, in 1991 only 4 had an absolute majority of the titular groups—North Ossetia, Tuva, Checheno-Ingushetia and Chuvashia—while 3 had a simple majority: Tatarstan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Kalmykia. Russians formed the majority of the population in the rest. Economically, all but two of the seven republics listed above were heavily dependent on the federal budget; only Tatarstan, a major manufacturing centre which produced 25 per cent of the country's oil, and Checheno-Ingushetia, which produced 90 per cent of Russia's kerosene, were net contributors.<sup>28</sup> Only these two republics refused to sign federal treaties with Russia in 1992; but in Tatarstan the main issue was the distribution of revenues between a central *nomenklatura* and a peripheral one, and a deal was eventually reached early in 1994. Only in Chechnya did a democratic movement for secession emerge, and only there did the cause of independence gather significant mass support.

What of Russia's strategic objections? Chechnya sits near the centre of the isthmus separating the Black Sea and the Caspian, and the Russian authorities frequently raised the spectre of an independent Chechnya galvanizing the other Caucasian peoples to form a single state that

<sup>27</sup> John Dunlop, 'How Many Soldiers and Civilians Died During the Russo-Chechen War of 1994–96?', *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 19, nos 3–4, (September 2000), pp. 329–39. Lieven, *Tombstone*, pp. 102–46 gives a fine analysis of the course of the war.

<sup>28</sup> *Financial Times*, 8 September 2004; James Hughes, 'Managing Secession Potential in the Russian Federation', *Regional and Federal Studies*, vol. 11, no. 3 Autumn 2001, pp. 41–3

would choke Russian supply lines and threaten vital geopolitical interests. But after an initial surge in solidarity in the early 1990s, interest in a pan-Caucasian state rapidly waned—especially so in the wake of the Ingush–North Ossetian war of 1992—and by 1994 the Chechens were entirely isolated. Still more damaging to such arguments is the Russians' strategic hypocrisy: furious at the prospect of Chechen secession, they to this day arm and encourage irredentism in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Indeed, many of the Chechen field commanders who would fight the Russians in 1994–96—among them Shamil Basaev—were trained by the GRU, Russian military intelligence, for deployment in Abkhazia in 1992–93.

Once the motives of restoring order, preventing Russia's disintegration and protecting its strategic interests are removed, how then are we to explain the decision to invade in late 1994? A key individual role was played by the nationalities minister Sergei Shakhrai, fresh from wrapping up the treaty with Tatarstan, and long personally ill-disposed towards Dudaev. In broader terms, John Dunlop has pointed to the 'outbreak of a virulent form of Russian neo-imperialism', which sought to re-establish Russia's dominance over its periphery. After its defeat in Afghanistan and the US victory in the Gulf, the Russian military was also eager to re-assert itself. But the principal impetus was supplied by the Yeltsin regime's urgent need for a 'small victorious war' to consolidate its endlessly corrupt and increasingly unpopular rule.<sup>29</sup> The same desperate need to hold on to the levers of power, and the associated profit-streams, undoubtedly persuaded Yeltsin's clique of the wisdom of concluding a truce at Khasavyurt two years later, after Chechen forces had brought the Russian army to a standstill.

### *Out of the rubble*

The Chechen state that emerged from the rubble in 1996 was confronted with tasks that would have been daunting even with a unified domestic political scene and vast quantities of international aid. A prime factor in its subsequent misfortunes lay in the very document that had secured peace: the postponement of a decision on Chechnya's status

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<sup>29</sup> The infamous phrase was originally uttered by Nicholas II's interior minister Viacheslav Plehve with reference to the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–05; it was repeated in 1994 by Oleg Lobov, secretary of the Security Council—who is also reported to have added, 'like the US had in Haiti'. See Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, p. 211, and Lieven, *Tombstone*, p. 87.

until 2001 by the Khasavyurt accords. The Russians worked assiduously to ensure that the Chechen government remained trapped in a juridical limbo, unable to secure international recognition or seek redress against the former occupiers. Only Afghanistan and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus were willing to accord Chechen envoys full diplomatic status. To this day, official Islamic solidarity has been non-existent: 'not a single Arab country ever recognized Chechen independence, and their rulers consistently voiced support of Russia's territorial integrity'. Little better was to be expected from the West, where in 1995 Clinton compared Yeltsin's anti-separatist stance to that of Abraham Lincoln, and was to hail the liberation of Grozny in 2000.<sup>30</sup>

Economic life in Chechnya was at a low ebb. Much of the country's infrastructure and industry had been pulverized by Russian bombardment, while the reconstruction funds allocated by Moscow were routinely embezzled before reaching their destination—in 1997 Yeltsin professed amazement that of \$130m sent to the Chechen National Bank, only \$20m ever arrived. Out of 44 industrial concerns operating in 1994, only 17 were running in 1999; production in the latter year stood at 5–8 per cent of the pre-war level. In 1998, unemployment stood at 80 per cent, while it was estimated that legitimate sources of income could only reach a third of the way to the poverty threshold. In these circumstances, barter, woodcutting and metal salvaging became important means of subsistence. But it was above all crime that flourished, most notably kidnapping and small-scale pirate oil-processing operations—in 1999 there were an estimated 800 mini-refineries run by armed factions siphoning off oil from pipelines. Grozny's arms market, too, did a roaring trade—as, more surprisingly, did markets in general, which were full of cheap goods and agricultural products. Social provision, however, had collapsed: education was almost non-existent, and access to health services minimal; infant mortality was estimated to stand at an incredible 100 per 1000.<sup>31</sup>

External silence and profound social and economic dislocations combined with internal turbulence to choke off any prospect of a viable political project. The presidential elections held in Chechnya in January 1997—described by the OSCE as 'exemplary and free'—were won by

<sup>30</sup> Trenin and Malashenko, *Restless Frontier*, pp. 191, 198.

<sup>31</sup> Embezzled funds: Trenin and Malashenko, *Restless Frontier*, p. 37; industry, markets, infant mortality: Tishkov, *Obshchestvo*, pp. 436–41; unemployment, income, mini-refineries: I. G. Kosikov and L. S. Kosikova, *Severnyi Kavkaz: sotsialno-ekonomicheskii spravochnik*, Moscow 1999, pp. 188–90.

Aslan Maskhadov, a former Soviet artillery general and Dudaev's minister of defence, who received 59.3 per cent of the votes; his nearest rivals were Basaev, with 23.5 per cent, and Yandarbiev, with 10.1 per cent.<sup>32</sup> The results—far more evenly distributed than those in Georgia's 1995 elections, or the farcically one-sided contests in Kazakhstan in 1994 or Azerbaijan in 1998—register the country's principal political faultlines, which divided Maskhadov's project for an independent secular Chechnya from the uncompromising stance of some of his field commanders, who in several cases advocated a pan-Caucasian Islamic state as the sole guarantee of Chechen independence.

The confrontation between secularists and Islamists was to prove fatal to Maskhadov, who as of 1998 was increasingly defied by powerful players such as Basaev, Yandarbiev and Salman Raduev. Maskhadov made misguided attempts to undercut his adversaries' support—such as the 1999 introduction of elements of *sharia* law, in contravention of Chechnya's 1992 constitution—and on several occasions entered into armed conflict with forces loyal to former field commanders such as Raduev and Arbi Baraev, in a bid to free hostages taken as part of the kidnapping business that flourished in Chechnya from 1996–99.<sup>33</sup> Maskhadov's opponents, meanwhile, repeatedly stepped up criminal activities at moments designed to undermine negotiations with the Russians—most notably with the kidnap and killing of the Russian Interior Ministry envoy Gennadii Shpigun in March 1999.

Many Western commentators have seen the failures of Maskhadov's regime as grounds for including Chechnya in the ever-expanding category of 'failed states' undeserving of sovereignty, and which it would be better to place under the custodianship of more civilized great powers.<sup>34</sup> This argument should be rejected as decisively in Chechnya as elsewhere. Few states would have been able to establish a peaceful, prosperous society in three years given the physical ruin, economic collapse and countless political and social fractures wrought by two years of war with a vastly more powerful neighbour. Isolation and the war's

<sup>32</sup> See 'Chronology', in Curran et al., *Search for Peace*. For engaging snapshots of Chechnya during the election, as well as a much richer portrait of the North Caucasus in Soviet and post-Soviet times, see Georgi Derluguian, *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, forthcoming.

<sup>33</sup> See Trenin and Malashenko, *Restless Frontier*, pp. 27–34.

<sup>34</sup> See Anatol Lieven, 'A Western Strategy for Chechnya', *International Herald Tribune*, 9 September 2004

shattering after-effects to a great extent shaped the character and fortunes of independent Chechnya, as to a lesser extent did its essentially anarchic social traditions. But it should be stressed that the prime cause of Chechnya's woes from 1996–99 was the utter devastation wreaked upon it by the Russian military in the preceding years.

### *Uses of Islamism*

Much has been written about the role of Islam in Chechnya—the Russian military claiming the country is awash with Arab mercenaries, and that it forms part of an incipient 'Wahhabite crescent' threatening to engulf Russia's entire southern flank. Since 9.11, the West has largely colluded with such fantasies by identifying Russia as its ally against an 'Islamic threat' emanating from Central Asia. But the character and composition of Islamic radicalism in the North Caucasus have largely been misunderstood. What is commonly referred to as 'Wahhabism' is, more accurately, Salafism, and has indigenous roots in the struggle between orthodox forms of Islam and local syncretistic traditions. The Sufism that took root in Chechnya in the late 18th century accommodated veneration of Chechen holy figures and shrines, and played a vital underground role in cementing Chechen national identity during exile. The 1980s saw a religious revival and, for the first time in Chechnya since 1944, the construction of mosques; but it was only during the war of 1994–96 that Islam emerged here as a political phenomenon, a tool for mobilizing and providing discipline in the resistance to Russian occupation. More austere Salafite interpretations gained ground simply due to the prestige and armed strength of field commanders such as Basaev and Raduev—who may have embraced Sunni orthodoxy in a bid to secure financial support from the Gulf—and after the war because of economic hardship and the impasse reached by the secular independence project.<sup>35</sup>

The escalating Islamization of Chechnya, meanwhile—Yandarbiev signed into law a new criminal code based on Sudan's, and later he and Basaev called for the abolition of the presidency in favour of an imamate—should be seen as part of an internal political battle over the nature of the Chechen state. Elsewhere in the North Caucasus, the targets and social bases of radical Islam are different, born of economic misery and

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<sup>35</sup> Trenin and Malashenko, *Restless Frontier*, p. 101. See Lieven, *Tombstone*, pp. 24–5, for a discussion of Islam during *perestroika*, and the curious neo-Gothic architecture of the new mosques.

frustration with the political closure effected by immovable elites. Levels of funding from abroad for Islamists have been greatly exaggerated—as have the numbers of volunteers, which experts even now put at no more than 1–2 per cent of pro-independence forces. For all the claims of international Islamic involvement in Chechnya, the cause in which resistance has been mobilized there remains that of national independence. In a less guarded moment, Putin himself implicitly admitted as much, revealingly comparing the campaign launched in Chechnya ‘to the security service operation in the Baltics and Western Ukraine . . . aimed at eradicating anti-Soviet resistance lasting from 1944 to the mid-1950s’.<sup>36</sup> His continual insistence on the Islamic dimension serves only to underline the base opportunism of his ‘anti-terrorist operation’—a colonial war repackaged for domestic and international consumption.

### *Putin's war*

According to the Russian analysts Dmitri Trenin and Aleksei Malashenko, preparations for war in Chechnya were ‘well under way’ as early as 1998.<sup>37</sup> The pretext this time was provided by Basaev’s August 1999 incursion into Dagestan, which marked an attempt to expand the influence of Islamists who had already established micro-imamates there, and ultimately to unite Chechnya with Dagestan and form an independent Islamic state.<sup>38</sup> Although Basaev was quickly expelled from Dagestan, a series of explosions in apartment buildings in Buinaksk, Volgodonsk and Moscow in late August and September—FSB collusion has repeatedly, and plausibly, been alleged—prepared domestic opinion for the ‘counter-terrorist operation’ that began at the end of September.

Vladimir Putin’s rule has unarguably marked a transition from the oligarchic capitalism of Yeltsin to a more authoritarian mode—he has, notably, installed dozens of former KGB personnel in key positions throughout government, and brought the powerful plutocrats of the 90s to heel or else driven them into exile. But it is the war in Chechnya—launched within a month of his appointment as prime minister—that has been his principal means of consolidating power, paving the way for his smooth ascent to the presidency in March 2000, and ensuring a staggering degree of compliance from political elites and intelligentsia alike.

<sup>36</sup> Trenin and Malashenko, *Restless Frontier*, pp. 93–4, 97, 119.

<sup>37</sup> Trenin and Malashenko, *Restless Frontier*, p. iii.

<sup>38</sup> For a more detailed account, see Georgi Derluguian, ‘Che Guevaras in Turbans’, NLR I/237, September–October 1999.

Putin's war on Chechnya has been characterized from the outset by a far more relentless use of force than that of his predecessor, not only in terms of troops and ordnance but also cruelty to civilians from an army bent on revenge, and increasingly composed of *kontraktniki*, professional soldiers often recruited from Russia's prisons. On 1 October, Russian forces—100,000-strong this time, compared to the 24,000 Yeltsin had initially deployed—entered Chechnya after several weeks of massive aerial bombardment had virtually levelled the remnants of Grozny. After securing the lowlands north of the Terek in the autumn of 1999, they rolled southward and, in February 2000, took Grozny, suffering heavy casualties in the process. Chechen government troops retreated to the mountains, where they were pounded by Russian artillery and air-strikes.

Putin strolled to victory in the March election—Blair rushed to Moscow to be the first world leader to congratulate him—and in June appointed Akhmad Kadyrov as puppet ruler. But for all the talk of 'normalization', as Putin passed responsibility for Chechnya from the army to the FSB and then to the Interior Ministry (MVD), Chechen resistance forces remained able to infiltrate Russian lines. The massed troops of the Russian Defence Ministry, MVD, FSB and special forces (OMON) controlled the plains by day, but Chechen forces began to conduct guerrilla operations by night, picking off convoys or patrols before melting into the forest. Since then, the conflict has remained one between 'an elephant and a whale, each invisible in its own medium'.<sup>39</sup>

With Russian casualties rising—the official figure for 2002–03 was 4,749, the highest in one year since 1999, and the monthly average for 2004 is currently higher than American losses in Iraq—Putin has since 2001 adopted a strategy of 'Chechenization'.<sup>40</sup> This has meant troop reductions—around 60,000 Russian soldiers now face an active resistance estimated at a maximum of 5,000—and the delegation of many combat operations to militias under the control of Kadyrov's puppet government.<sup>41</sup> Kadyrov was shoehorned into the presidency of Chechnya in a rigged election in October 2003—in which 20,000 of the occupying troops were eligible to vote—but his assassination on 9 May 2004

<sup>39</sup> Trenin and Malashenko, *Restless Frontier*, p. 42.

<sup>40</sup> 2002–03 casualty figures: *The Military Balance 2003*, p. 86; 2004. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 25 October 2004.

<sup>41</sup> Estimates for the number of active Chechen resistance fighters have ranged from 2,000 to 5,000. See Trenin and Malashenko, *Restless Frontier*, pp. 121, 238 n. 29; *Military Balance 2003*, Table 41; *Komsomolskaya pravda*, 10 September 2004.

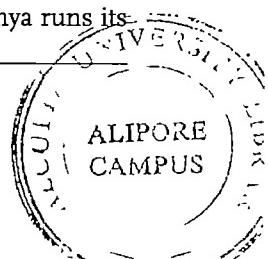
required yet more fraudulent elections this autumn, won by Kadyrov clan loyalist Alu Alkhanov. The change of personnel will do little to alter the character of the quisling regime. Under the command of Kadyrov's son Ramzan, the *kadyrovtsy* have become infamous for their brutality, and have tortured and killed their countrymen no less assiduously than the occupiers themselves. Kadyrov's administration, while professedly setting about the reconstruction of Chechnya, remained a corrupt clique—Putin's human rights envoy to Chechnya admitted that no more than 10 per cent of the \$500m allocated to Chechnya in 2001 had been spent, and in 2002, FSB director Nikolai Patrushev admitted that \$22m had been 'misused' that year.<sup>42</sup>

There can be no greater indictment of Putin's rule than the present condition of Chechnya. Grozny's population has been reduced to around 200,000—half its size in 1989—who now eke out an existence amid the moonscape of bomb craters and ruins their city has become. According to UNHCR figures, some 160,000 displaced Chechens remained within the warzone by 2002, while another 160,000 were living in refugee camps in Ingushetia. The latter figure has declined somewhat since—a Médecins Sans Frontières report of August 2004 estimated that around 50,000 Chechen refugees remained in Ingushetia—thanks to the Kremlin's policy of closing down camps and prohibiting the construction of housing for refugees there. Those forced back to Chechnya live on the brink of starvation, moving from one bombed-out cellar to another, avoiding the routine terror of *zachistki* and the checkpoints manned by hooded soldiers, where women have to pay bribes of \$10 to avoid their daughters being raped, and men aged 15–65 are taken away to 'filtration camps' or simply made to disappear. The Russian human rights organization Memorial, which covers only a third of Chechnya, reported that between January 2002 and August 2004, some 1,254 people were abducted by federal forces, of whom 757 are still missing.<sup>43</sup>

The military stalemate has produced a chilling degeneration among the occupying forces. Sheltered by an official policy of impunity—many officers, for instance, have been permitted to have several different identities, ostensibly to protect them from 'revenge attacks' by Chechens—Russian troops have engaged in an orgy of theft and arbitrary cruelty. Each of the ministries operating in Chechnya runs its

<sup>42</sup> Trenin and Malashenko, *Restless Frontier*, p. 38.

<sup>43</sup> *Guardian*, 30 September 2004.



own fiefdom, with corresponding rackets and sales of arms, often to the Chechen resistance fighters themselves. There are dozens of reported instances of soldiers returning the bodies of civilian casualties only for a fee—which is higher for a corpse than a living person, because of the importance in Chechen traditions of burial on clan lands. The violence has not been limited to Chechen civilians: an estimated half of Russian casualties have come in non-combat situations, mostly due to systematic bullying of demoralized teenage recruits—largely those without parents rich enough to buy exemption from service. Those returning to Russia from service in Chechnya often bring with them the vicious habits learned there.<sup>44</sup> In that sense, the ugly symptoms of Russia's aggression towards Chechnya have metastasized into a cancer that threatens to consume Russian public and private life.

The Russian media had played a key role in conveying something of the horrors of the 1994–96 war; this time, the authorities have not made the mistake of allowing them freedom to operate, and have closed down or replaced the editorial teams of the two most critical sources of news, NTV and TV6.<sup>45</sup> A striking contrast between the current war and the previous one has been the manner in which Russian official discourse has permeated journalistic commentary, to the point where 'terrorist' and 'Chechen' have become virtually synonymous. This has had poisonous social repercussions: generalized antipathy to 'persons of Caucasian extraction' has often flared up into outright xenophobia, resulting in both official and spontaneous public persecution not only of Chechens but also of several other peoples from the region.<sup>46</sup> It is this widespread public hostility to

<sup>44</sup> For a powerful account both of daily life in Chechnya under the occupation and its repercussions in Russia, see Anna Politkovskaya, *A Small Corner of Hell: Dispatches from Chechnya*, Chicago 2003. Bullying: Trenin and Malashenko, *Restless Frontier*, p. 141.

<sup>45</sup> Many crucial and courageous reports have been filed from Chechnya by Anna Politkovskaya for *Novaia gazeta* and Andrei Babitsky for Radio Svoboda; but in Russia, the influence of radio and especially print are negligible compared to that of television.

<sup>46</sup> In September 1999, for instance, 15,000 Caucasians were expelled from Moscow by the city authorities and another 69,000 compelled to re-register, in September 2003, 54 Chechen students were beaten by a skinhead mob in Nalchik; in April 2004, a 10-year-old Armenian boy was set on fire in a market in Kostroma; in September 2004, a gang of 20 youths ransacked cafés belonging to Caucasians in Yekaterinburg. See Amnesty International report, 'For the Motherland', December 1999; *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 15 October 2003; *Moscow Times*, 23 April 2004; *Moscow News*, 9 September 2004.

the Chechen cause, together with the more general political atomization and apathy of contemporary Russia, that largely explain the absence of a cogent movement against the war. There have recently been some stirrings on this front: on 23 October, human-rights organizations staged a demonstration on Moscow's Pushkin Square that drew up to 2,000 participants, and on 6–7 November the Soldiers' Mothers' Committees held the founding congress for a new political party. But dissent has thus far focused largely on the war's brutality rather than its political roots. Even on the left, the question of Chechen independence has at times all but vanished.<sup>47</sup>

### *Regional repercussions*

The horrors of Beslan, where on 3 September this year at least 350 people died after Russian troops stormed a school in which hostages were being held by an Islamist group loyal to Shamil Basaev, form part of a logic of escalating violence engendered by the Russian occupation. While resistance has predominantly taken the form of guerrilla actions inside Chechnya against Russian troops and pro-Moscow Chechens, the current war has seen the increasing resort to violence outside Chechnya's borders—including the previously unused tactic of suicide bombings. Such methods are, of course, above all an expression of utter desperation, perpetrated by people with nothing to lose but their lives; it has been suggested that the high incidence of female suicide bombers may be connected with widespread rape by Russian troops, though this aspect of the war is still less reported than the rest.<sup>48</sup>

Since the suicide bombings of government and military targets in Mzodok, Gudermes, Znamenskoe and elsewhere, as well as attacks in public

<sup>47</sup> Boris Kagarlitsky writes that 'the central issue . . . is not Chechen independence or Russia's territorial integrity, but democracy in Russia and Chechnya': see 'Where is Chechnya Going?', *Moscow Times*, 3 June 2004.

<sup>48</sup> The case of Colonel Yuri Budanov has acted as a barometer for what Chechens can expect from Russian troops and officials: convicted of kidnapping, raping and killing an 18-year-old Chechen girl, Budanov was eventually sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment, after official support for his insanity plea provoked outrage. His recent request for a pardon was approved by Vladimir Shamanov, a veteran of the Chechen campaign and now governor of Ulyanovsk, but withdrawn after further protests and a 10,000-strong public demonstration in Grozny. See Politkovskaya, *Small Corner of Hell*, pp. 153–60, and Institute of War and Peace Reporting, *Caucasus News Update*, 23 September 2004, available at [www.iwpr.net](http://www.iwpr.net).

spaces in Moscow, Russian officialdom has spoken of a 'Palestinization' of the Chechen resistance. The largely unmentioned obverse, or rather, precursor of this has been an 'Israelization' of Russian strategy. The mass of checkpoints designed to prevent the population from moving freely; the killing of unarmed civilians; the impunity enjoyed by the occupying forces; the deliberate economic immiseration and overall humiliation visited on the inhabitants of the occupied territory—all these features are common to the West Bank and Chechnya today. In February of this year, Russia resorted once again to targeted assassination, killing former president Yandarbiev in Qatar with a car-bomb—an operation to which it was rumoured that Israeli secret services had lent their expertise.

As Israel has done in the West Bank, Gaza and Lebanon, the Russians have conducted raids on the refugee camps in Ingushetia, seeing them as breeding grounds and hiding places for resistance fighters. These repeated incursions have served only to enrage both the refugees and the local population, between whom Russian soldiers have proved unable or unwilling to distinguish. It is worth noting that the raids on government offices in Nazran in June this year were conducted primarily by Ingush, and that there were almost as many Ingush among the Beslan hostage takers as Chechens. Though the Russian authorities now speak with alarm of a possible 'regionalization' of the conflict, it is an expansion and escalation entirely of their own making.

There are plenty of socio-economic grounds for discontent at Russian rule in the North Caucasus. The region remains one of the country's poorest, with the lowest wages and official unemployment rates several times higher than the national average—29 per cent in Dagestan and 35 in Ingushetia, compared to 9 per cent nationwide.<sup>49</sup> Characteristically, Putin has opted to deal with the possibility of political challenges from the disenfranchised by coercive means, first by ensuring the election of loyal FSB cadres such as Murat Ziazikov—lowered into place in Ingushetia after Putin engineered the exit of the popular Ruslan Aushev—and now by ending the election of regional governors altogether in favour of handpicked appointees. This is, of course, part of a much wider re-centralization of authority under Putin; but once again, Chechnya has had a formative influence on the new Russian political elite's strategy and composition. Of the seven presidential plenipotentiaries appointed

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<sup>49</sup> *The Territories of the Russian Federation 2004*, London 2004, pp. 30–5.

in 2000, two were former commanders in the Chechen war, and several more veterans have become regional governors or taken up other official roles.<sup>50</sup> More than an expedient assault on a weakened enemy, the war in Chechnya has been an important source of cadres for Putin's neo-authoritarian project.

### *Under Western eyes*

What has been the international response to the ongoing assault on Chechen statehood? As the Chechen foreign ministry official Roman Khalilov dryly notes, 'the international community's record of timely, painless recognition of secession is extremely poor'.<sup>51</sup> Here Chechnya has been a casualty of the basest *Realpolitik*. Western governments gave the nod to Yeltsin's war as a regrettable side-effect of a presidency that had at all costs to be prolonged, if capitalism was to be successful in Russia. Putin has benefited from a similarly craven consensus. Yet for all the column inches expended on the harm done to Russia's fragile democracy by the imprisonment of Yukos chairman Mikhail Khodorkovsky, it is in Chechnya that the face of Putin's regime is truly revealed, and it is above all by its sponsorship of wanton brutality there that it should be judged.

The few early criticisms of Putin's campaign from such bodies as the OSCE and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe were soon toned down, and dismissed by European governments as counter-productive amid attempts to welcome Putin to the European fold. In September 2001, while state-sanctioned murders were being committed with impunity in Chechnya, Putin received a standing ovation in the Bundestag; in the summer of 2002, Chirac endorsed the Russian view of the 'anti-terrorist operation', and he and Schroeder reiterated their support at Sochi in August 2004. Collective EU efforts have been limited to humanitarian aid for the refugee camps in Ingushetia.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Trenin and Malashenko, *Restless Frontier*, pp. 152–4.

<sup>51</sup> Roman Khalilov, 'Moral Justifications of Secession. The Case of Chechnya', *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 22, no. 4 (December 2003), p. 414.

<sup>52</sup> The French journalist Anne Nivat provides an illustrative vignette. The future Finnish president Tarja Halonen visited a camp in 1999, repeatedly insisting 'I represent the European Union, I'm here to help you' and asking what the refugees' problems were; but when confronted by replies such as 'We want a political resolution, not war' and 'Tell them to stop bombing us, to stop killing our children', Halonen seemed at a loss, and could only offer around tangerines. Nivat, *Chienne de Guerre*, New York 2001, p. 54.

Despite repeated approaches from Maskhadov's envoys, the UN has, for its part, refused to meet with Chechnya's legitimately elected leaders—though Kofi Annan was quick to express his grief at the assassination of the puppet Kadyrov earlier this year. On a visit to Moscow in 2002, Annan even praised Putin's efforts at conflict resolution—doubtless appreciative of the latter's prior backing for his bid to secure a second term as Secretary General. Questions about Russia's actions in Chechnya have routinely been sidestepped at meetings of the UN's Human Rights Committee. Nor has support been forthcoming from elsewhere. Arab governments have emphasized their support for Russia's territorial integrity, while in 1999 the Iranian foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi insisted the Russo-Chechen war was strictly an internal affair. China has seen in Yeltsin's and now Putin's suppression of Chechen aspirations for independence a useful precedent for its own dealings with Tibet and Xinjiang.<sup>53</sup>

Official reaction in the US, of course, has been conditioned by the needs of the 'war on terror'. After the attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon, Putin wasted no time in linking Chechnya to the wider battle against Islamic extremism, and gave the US permission to plant forward bases across Central Asia, its former sphere of influence, as a quid pro quo for Washington's approval for war in Chechnya. The Bush administration has responded with the requisite silence—though this is a marked change of tack for many of the neo-cons, whose hostility to Russia has meant support for Chechen independence from unlikely quarters. Members of the American Committee for Peace in Chechnya include Richard Perle, Kenneth Adelman, Elliott Abrams, Midge Decter and James Woolsey. Outside official circles, right-wingers such as Richard Pipes have also argued the Chechens' case, pointing out that authoritarianism is in Russians' DNA and that Putin would do well to learn the lessons de Gaulle drew from Algeria.<sup>54</sup>

Liberals, by contrast, have been divided between those who accept the devastation visited on Chechnya as a regrettable bump in Russia's difficult road to a stable democracy, and those who actively endorse Putin's war. Despite the constitutional propriety of the Chechens' demands, there is almost universal agreement on the unacceptability of Chechen

<sup>53</sup> Trenin and Malashenko, *Restless Frontier*, pp. 191, 205

<sup>54</sup> John Laughland, 'The Chechens' American Friends', *Guardian*, 8 September 2004; Richard Pipes, 'Give the Chechens a Land of Their Own', *New York Times*, 9 September 2004.

independence. 'The first requirement is the exclusion of formal independence as a subject for negotiation', concludes Jonathan Steele, on the grounds that Putin will simply not accept secession.<sup>55</sup> Anatol Lieven describes Russia's right to wage war on Chechnya as 'incontestable', at the same time urging 'more nuanced' assessments of Russian war crimes. More recently, he has insisted that the West take a tougher line with Maskhadov, pressing him not only to break with the 'terrorists' but to fight them 'alongside Russian forces'.<sup>56</sup> Blair's fulsome support for Putin, meanwhile, only underscores the hypocritical selectivity of his 'humanitarian interventionism'.

### *An anti-colonial struggle*

Putin's decision in September 2004 to place a bounty on the heads of both Basaev and Maskhadov signals his intent: no political settlement with pro-independence forces will be contemplated, no future for Chechnya envisaged other than a series of Kremlin-installed puppets disbursing favours to those whose loyalty can be bought or whose needs have overruled their principles. The Russians, echoing the Israeli tactic of claiming 'there is no partner for peace', have worked hard to close off potential dialogue; Maskhadov's repeated offers of negotiations and proposals for peace—the latest involving UN protectorate status for Chechnya as an interim stage on the road to independence—have fallen on deaf ears.

The military solution Russia has sought over the last decade is, however, unlikely to materialize. In 1994–96 Chechnya won a remarkable victory against an adversary that massively outmanned and outgunned it, and though the sheer weight of the force currently deployed against it makes large-scale successes such as the 1996 re-taking of Grozny seem unlikely, the very brutality of the Russian occupation will succeed only in generating resistance. This in turn means that perhaps the most striking feature of the post-Soviet political landscape will remain in place: the determining role played by this tiny nation in the fortunes of its incomparably larger neighbour. The Chechens have defeated the Russian army, crippled the Yeltsin presidency, provided the springboard for Putin's ascent to power, and now present the principal threat to Russia's stability. The frictionless extension of his term to 2008 notwithstanding, a constant

<sup>55</sup> 'Doing Well out of War', *London Review of Books*, 21 October 2004.

<sup>56</sup> Anatol Lieven, 'Chechnya and the Laws of War', in Trenin and Malashenko, *Restless Frontier*, pp. 209–24; and Lieven, 'A Western Strategy for Chechnya'.

stream of casualties from Chechnya may in the end prove as costly to Putin as it was to Yeltsin.

The scale of destruction wrought in Chechnya in the course of the last decade, the scores of thousands of deaths, the continuing savagery of the occupation, all form a standing rebuke to the complacency of Western governments and citizens alike. But the most shameful aspect of both Russian and Western reactions to Chechnya—a mixture of eager complicity and mute acquiescence—is the consistent refusal to countenance the Chechens' legitimate aspirations to independence. We should have no truck with such evasions. The Chechens are engaged in an anti-colonial struggle comparable to those waged by Europe's other colonies in Africa or Asia in the last century. They have never accepted foreign dominion—'no legitimate Chechen authority has ever signed any formal treaty accepting Russian or Soviet authority'—and have repeatedly given democratic approval to the idea of sovereign statehood.<sup>77</sup> The starting point for any discussion should be the fact that they are as entitled to their independence as any other nation.

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<sup>77</sup> Khalilov, 'Moral Justifications', p. 410.

## A REPUBLICAN PROLETARIAT

**W**ITHIN TWO DAYS of Bush's 2004 election victory, Bill Clinton was making clear what direction the Democrats should now take. The party had to 'engage the American heartland in a conversation about religion and values'.

Too many voters thought that Democrats did not believe in faith or family. Kerry had failed to condemn gay marriage with the ardour required—'He said it once or twice but not a thousand times, in small towns'—or to point out that abortions had fallen by over 20 per cent under the Clinton Administration, and had risen under Bush.<sup>1</sup> Was the Kerry campaign too 'liberal' to win? 'Maybe this time the voters chose what they actually want', exclaimed the *Nation's* Katha Pollitt. 'Nationalism, pre-emptive war, order not justice, "safety" through torture, backlash against women and gays, a gulf between haves and have-nots, government largesse for their churches . . .'<sup>2</sup>

At stake is not just the small but unmistakeable rightward shift in voters' self-descriptions, with 'conservatives' up to 34 per cent from 29 per cent in 2000, and 'moderates' down from 50 to 45 per cent; nor that 'moral values' trumped the economy, the occupation of Iraq and terrorism as the top issue of the election campaign. It is the fact that so many of the voters that turned out to swell Bush's 3.5 million lead are blue-collar workers, those bearing the brunt of Republican policies. Only 61 per cent of trade unionists voted for Kerry; among white union members, the figure was lower still. The former mine-and-steelworkers stronghold of West Virginia went for Bush by 13 per cent. There were significant swings to the Republicans among middle-income women and latino voters, traditionally pro-Democrat groups.

In post-mortems of an election that seemed to many to defy political logic—a clear swing towards an Administration that has brought rising

unemployment, tax cuts for the super-rich and the murderous quagmire of occupied Iraq, among precisely those most likely to lose their jobs, their homes, their relatives in the military—Thomas Frank's lively study of the 'great backlash' sweeping the country's heartland has become a central reference point. American liberals have had trouble believing that the blue-collar/corporate-capital alliance is really happening, Frank argues: 'For the Republican Party to present itself as the champion of working-class America strikes liberals as such an egregious denial of political reality that they dismiss the whole phenomenon'. The blue-collar Republican vote is explained away as 'crypto-racism, or a disease of the elderly, or the random griping of religious rednecks, or the protests of "angry white men"'.

Frank knows, of course, that the Reagan-era backlash attracted a mountain of liberal comment, and cites Christopher Lasch and others to good effect. It was during the Clinton years that the phenomenon was wished away by the well-intentioned—and at the same time, as Frank shows, deepened and reinforced. *What's the Matter with Kansas?* is a vivid and moving update, a depiction of the political mind and cultural yearnings of right-wing populism in a Great Plains state over the last fifteen years.<sup>3</sup> More generally, it offers a case-study in the flourishing of a party that talks about morality and religion in order to enact legislation that benefits big capital, at the expense of most of those who vote for it. Unlike more traditional forms of conservatism, characterized by deferential respect for the rich and powerful, this is a movement that:

imagines itself as a foe of the elite, as the voice of the unfairly persecuted, as a righteous protest of the people on history's receiving end. That its champions today control all three branches of government matters not a whit. That its greatest beneficiaries are the wealthiest people on the planet does not give it pause.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'If we don't make that argument, it is not surprising we are turned into two-dimensional aliens', Clinton concluded. *Financial Times*, 6 November 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Katha Pollitt, 'Mourn', *Nation*, 22 November 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Frank, *What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America*, New York 2004. The book has been marketed under the absurd title *What's the Matter with America?* in the UK and Europe, with just the kind of crass commercial motive that all Frank's work is a protest against. For a book, one of whose greatest strengths lies in the intimacy of its portrait of the state where the author grew up to be fanfare with airport inanity, because foreigners are presumed too ignorant to care about Kansas, is a peculiarly ironic fate: the price of best-sellerdom.

<sup>4</sup> *Kansas*, p. 6.

For Frank, this is the central contradiction of the backlash: ‘it is a working-class movement that has done incalculable harm to working-class people’. For though ‘values may “matter most” to the voters, they always take a backseat to the needs of money once the elections are won’. For decades, this has been right-wing populism’s most consistent feature: ‘Abortion is never halted. Affirmative action is never abolished.’ Instead, the politicians swept into office by this grassroots rebellion have ‘smashed the welfare state, reduced taxes for corporations and the wealthy, and generally facilitated the country’s return to a nineteenth-century pattern of wealth distribution.’<sup>5</sup>

### *Little state on the prairie*

With the aim of examining the backlash from top to bottom—its theorists, its elected officials, its footsoldiers—Frank returns to his native Kansas, the geographical navel of the country. It is here, he argues, in the place where Superman grew up, where Dorothy was whirled away by the tornado, that we can best understand the forces that have pulled the us so far to the right. His book provides a striking socio-economic portrait of the ‘reddest of the red states’ at the turn of the 21st century (in fact, with a 62 per cent vote for Bush in 2004, Kansas ranks only eighth in redness; Utah, at 71 per cent, comes top). Its 2.7 million people, the vast majority of them white, closely parallel the demographics of the Republicans’ electoral bastions.

The population of rural Kansas has been dwindling: agriculture lost over 20,000 jobs in the 1990s alone, falling from 6 to 3.8 per cent of the labour force, as the 1996 Freedom to Farm Act wiped out the last of the New Deal protections for small farmers. Many rural counties lost a quarter of their populations. Façades are boarded up along the Main Streets of small farming towns, and grass grows in the sidewalks; one community actually auctioned off its local school on eBay. Out to the west, the ill-named Garden City is one of the state’s chief cow-butchering centres, which together boast a daily slaughter capacity of some 24,000 beasts. Frank describes the eerie farmland, the giant irrigation devices rolling around the vast cornfields, ‘feedlots the size of cities that transform the corn into cowflesh’ and the windowless concrete slaughterhouses that silently harvest the final product. Around them are the sprawling

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<sup>5</sup> *Kansas*, pp. 6–7.

trailer-park suburbs, unpaved and rubbish-strewn, where the mainly migrant workers provide cheap, non-unionized labour—caught, as Frank puts it, ‘on the steel hooks of economic logic just as surely and as haplessly as the cows they so industriously hack apart’. In Wichita, two hundred miles east, the aviation industry has shed half its union workforce. Unemployment is over 7 per cent and home foreclosures are soaring. Only the affluent Kansas City suburbs of Johnson County—‘cupcake land’—appear to be booming.<sup>6</sup>

Yet the state’s political scene presents ‘a panorama of madness and delusion worthy of Hieronymus Bosch’—one of:

sturdy blue-collar patriots reciting the Pledge while they strangle their own life chances; of small farmers proudly voting themselves off the land; of devoted family men carefully seeing to it that their children will never be able to afford college or proper health care; of working-class guys in mid-western cities cheering as they deliver up a landslide for a candidate whose policies will end their way of life, will transform their region into a rust-belt, will strike people like them blows from which they will never recover.

Kansas was not always a bastion of conservatism, and Frank summons up the state’s abolitionist, populist and New Deal past. Its early white settlers included militant opponents of slavery, John Brown and his sons among them, who aimed to block the westward expansion of Missouri slavocracy by armed force. Several decades later Carrie Nation was smashing up Kansan saloons with her hatchet, in the name of sobriety and the women’s cause. It was here that Eugene Debs accepted the Socialist Party’s nomination for president in 1908; Earl Browder, future Secretary-General of the American Communist Party, grew up in Wichita. Radical Populism swept the state in the 1890s. Kansans supported their Populist neighbour, William Jennings Bryan, in the pivotal election of 1896—but switched to William McKinley for his second term. Since then, in fact,

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<sup>6</sup> This is where Frank grew up, a teenage patriot who knew the name of every ship sunk at Pearl Harbour, and youthful Reaganite denouncing ‘creeping government regulation’ in high-school debates. It was the exclusionary elitism of Kansas University in the early 1980s that radicalized him, and sent him off to Chicago’s South Side; where, a decade later, he would be a founding editor of the *Baffler*. Frank recalls the Mission Hills area of his boyhood as having lapsed from 1920s grandeur into genteel decrepitude. Only with the CEO salary hikes and high stock returns of the 1990s did there come a new rash of Italianate porches, Olympic-size flowerbeds and multi-car garages, tended by armies of migrant labour.

the state has largely stayed in the Republican camp, with the exception of Wilson in 1912 and 1916, and Roosevelt in 1932 and 1936 (in the latter year against favourite son Alf Landon). By 1940 the state had returned to the Right, and Wendell Wilkie. The last time Kansas sent a Democrat to the Senate was in 1932; its last Democratic electors voted for Johnson in 1964; and only twice in its postwar history has the Kansas legislature had a Democratic majority.<sup>7</sup>

In this sense, of course, Kansas provides a far-from-typical test case for the latest wave of backlash populism in the US, which elsewhere has been tipping states from blue to red.<sup>8</sup> But if Frank tends to elide the facts of Kansan exceptionalism, he gives an excellent portrait of its shift from red to reddest, from moderate to conservative Republican. The gruesome Summer of Mercy in 1991 was the turning point in the battle of the Mods and Cons. A Wichita clinic was targeted by anti-abortion activists who took over the town for a week to lie down in front of cars and rally, twenty-five thousand strong, in the local football stadium. The militant Cons gathered recruits for precinct committees all across the state. The following year, Cons swamped the Kansas Republican Party primaries and led a ferocious battle against the pragmatist Mod old guard, the RINOS—Republicans in Name Only.

Populist resentment was mobilized here, of course, against not Democratic but Republican 'liberal elites'. In Johnson County, the Cons have had most support in the areas with the lowest per-capita income and housing values, while the Mods still thrive among the manicured lawns of Mission Hills.<sup>9</sup> By 1994 the Kansas conservatives had a majority in the

<sup>7</sup> Frank offers tantalizingly little explanation for the historically high concentration of religious fanaticism in Kansas in comparison with, say, Iowa or Nebraska. He mentions the Puritan background of the original white settlers, and Pentecostal arrivals in the 1940s and 50s, but plumps for environmental determinism the constant howling wind, which drove the settlers insane, and the featureless landscape, 'capable of convincing anyone of their own cosmic insignificance'.

<sup>8</sup> As Mike Davis argued in these pages over a decade ago, it is the edge cities of the Sunbelt that have become the new Republican heartlands, deliberately boosted by Federal policies after inner-city spending was slashed from 1978. Mike Davis, 'Who Killed Los Angeles', *NLR* 1/1993, Jan–Feb 1993.

<sup>9</sup> In their dreams, the Democratic Leadership Council may foresee the day when the old-fashioned Republican moderates flee the Sunbelt–Likud faction now in the ascendant in their party, into the Democrats' waiting arms. But why should they, so long as the GOP continues to deliver the goods?

state legislature's Republican bloc, as the warring factions consigned the Democrats to third-party status. In 1996, when the state's quintessentially Mod senior senator, Bob Dole, ran for president, the Arch-Con Sam Brownback won his vacated seat.<sup>10</sup>

Frank's explanation for these developments is above all cultural—or, as he puts it, 'culture war delivers the (economic) goods'. Frank has a good ear for the cadences of the right, and a strong stomach for the outpourings of its radio shows and effluvia of its columnists. He details the ways in which the conservative media stoke the indignation levels of an already resentful and self-righteous electorate, who have seen their economic existence eroded while their politicians demand but do not deliver the moral high ground. This is a receptive audience for the ventings of Rush Limbaugh, Gordon Liddy, Ann Coulter et al., and *What's the Matter with Kansas?* documents right-wing pundits' conscious cultivation of a 'plen-T-plaint' mentality among white working-class Americans against a class enemy defined by its cultural and consumption patterns—the Volvo-driving, latte-drinking, *fromage*-eating liberal elite—not its position and role within the economic system; Weberian status rather than class.

This is familiar ground, but Frank's earlier work lays the basis for a more nuanced analysis. His 1997 *The Conquest of Cool* charted the ways in which the tropes and values of the 1960s counter-culture had been co-opted by corporate advertising and the media industry, voided of any subversive content and set to work for big business: hedonism, rebellion and free love used to sell autos and electric appliances to the baby-boomer generation. The counter-culture itself and the mass protests of the 1960s—anti-war, black power—had been used by the American establishment to stoke the reactionary backlash of Reagan populism, which took on not just the Left and the civil-rights movement but organized labour, too. Here Frank shows how even their commodified simulacra can still be pressed into

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<sup>10</sup> A recent recruit to Opus Dei, along with Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas and Rick Santorum, Brownback advocates assessing national culture in terms of 'gross domestic piety'. Having tirelessly denounced the role of big money in politics, he was materially assisted by a shadowy corporate front-group, Triad Management Services, in his 1996 Senate contest, and celebrated the resulting victory at a reception sponsored by us Telecom Association, 'a powerful lobbying group for an industry whose deregulatory agenda the senator would diligently advance in the years to come'. A scion of one of the state's wealthiest families, Brownback has mastered the required hokum and regularly refers to himself on the floor of Congress as 'a farm boy from Parker, Kansas' *Kansas*, pp. 30, 74.

use for political ends, as advertising and entertainment-industry images of eroticized adolescent rebellion are tossed into a toxic ideological cocktail of out-of-control kids, black criminals, abortionists and sexual threat, deeply disturbing to an insecure Middle America.

### *The NAFTA effect*

But what clinched the alliance between defensive, atomized fractions of the working class and the traditional representatives of big business was, as Frank puts it, ‘the simultaneous suicide of the rival movement’. Politically, the final disintegration of the New Deal order had begun under Carter, whose response to economic stagnation, overseas setbacks and the ‘tax revolt’ of the white suburbs had been to slash inner-city programmes, deregulate telecoms, trucking and airlines, back Volcker’s interest-rate shock therapy at the Federal Reserve and stoke the Cold War in Afghanistan. Faced with a historic wave of plant closures, the AFL-CIO leadership restricted itself to shoring up pensions and watched its membership drain away. The consolidation of power by the Democratic Leadership Council following Reagan’s victory prevented any return to pre-1978 policies. The Rainbow Coalition was crushed or co-opted. New Democrats embraced welfare, health and education cuts and ‘tough on crime’ fear-mongering.

Helped into office by Ross Perot, Clinton was soon flailing. The Gingrich ‘Contract with America’ offensive successfully siphoned off corporate support and rallied Main Street small capital against his triangulated Health Plan. In 1994, for the first time in decades, the Republicans retook the House, boosted above all by the strength of the Cons in the Sunbelt suburbs. The Clinton Administration’s response was to woo the ‘new economy’ billionaires—venture capitalists, cyber barons, entertainment moguls and biotech wizards—scared off by the fundamentalism of the edge-city Republicans. NAFTA was the key to winning Seattle, Boston and Silicon Valley for the New Democrats. The AFL-CIO capitulated on free trade. Frank recounts the effects on the last labour stronghold of Wichita, Kansas, where Democratic representative Dan Glickman, a Clinton loyalist, backed the Agreement in the face of adamant grassroots opposition from the unionized Boeing workers who made up his base: ‘I couldn’t vote for him after that’, said one aircraft painter. ‘I know a lot of union members were really mad at Glickman when he voted for NAFTA.’ The blue-collar districts of south Wichita turned to the ultra-Con

Republican Todd Tiahrt, leaving Glickman the high-income east-side, where Republican Mods favoured his pro-choice line on abortion over that of their own party's candidate. As Wichita, so West Virginia, the hard-core DP state that cost Gore the election in 2000.<sup>11</sup>

### *Market euphoria*

The political shift was culturally reinforced by a broader, ideological move—the apotheosis of Clinton-era ‘market populism’, so memorably analysed by Frank in *One Market Under God*. The old-style backlash populism of the Cold War years, so successful in mobilizing a suburban and small-town electorate against the elitism and cultural depravity of the liberal establishment, rotten with pro-black politicians, pro-abortion judges, godless professors, anti-American high schools, etc., had never had much to say about the joys of the market. It was only under Clinton, Frank argues, that celebration of capitalism itself took centre stage in late-twentieth century American ideology: ‘the market as champion of the downtrodden Others of the planet’, empowering the little guy; a world in which ‘consumption is democracy’ and markets ‘represent a far more democratic form of organization than governments’. In this euphoric universe, manual labour had become obsolete and blue-collar workers were merely relics of a long-gone Fordist age. Instead, ‘knowledge workers’ were building the weightless economy of the new millennium. Paul Krugman hymned ‘the ascent of e-man’ at Enron, on whose board he sat, in *Fortune* magazine. The Bush Administration shrewdly exploited liberal denigration of labour with its paeans of praise to fire-fighters, construction workers and other proletarian heroes after 9.11.

There is some change of register, however, between *One Market under God* and *What's the Matter with Kansas?* Out of 250 pages depicting the phenomenon of blue-collar backlash that has led to the new Republican ascendancy, every one of sharp-eyed wit and humane intelligence, Frank devotes little more than a dozen to the Democratic Party. On the surface, these are caustic enough. The DLC's strategy of turning its back on working-class voters to court big corporations and affluent, white-collar constituencies deserves a large part of the blame for the latest backlash:

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<sup>11</sup> Locally, however, many blue-collar Bush voters continued to support the Democrats. In West Virginia, the DP won the governorship and two out of three congressional seats by nearly two-thirds majorities

The way to collect the votes and—more important—the money of these coveted constituencies, ‘New Democrats’ think, is to stand rock-solid on, say, the pro-choice position while making endless concessions on economic issues, on welfare, NAFTA, Social Security, labour law, privatization, deregulation and the rest of it . . . Like the conservatives, they take economic issues off the table. As for the working-class voters who were until recently the party’s very backbone, the DLC figures they will have nowhere else to go. Besides, what politician in this success-worshipping country really wants to be the voice of poor people? Where’s the soft money in that?<sup>12</sup>

While the Republicans were industriously fabricating a class-based populism of the right, topped with tax cuts, the Democrats, ‘with a laugh and a sneer’, were consigning working-class issues and spokespeople to the dustbin of history. As a result of their ‘historic decision to remake themselves as the other pro-business party’, Democrats ‘no longer speak to the people on the losing end of a free-market system that is becoming more brutal and arrogant by the day’.<sup>13</sup>

At first glance, this looks like a robust enough critique of the Democrats. But there is an obvious question it fails to ask: why does the Democratic Party act the way it does? All Frank says is that the strategy that has dominated most of its thinking since the early seventies is ‘criminally stupid’. But is ‘stupidity’ really an intelligent political category? Or is it a bit dumbed-down itself? Its effect is to suggest that the Democrats have simply made a mistake: if only they would come to their senses and remember their true interests, they would turn back to workers and the least well-off, and become once again the party of solidarity and social progress. Yet it should surely be plain enough that the Democratic Party is a vehicle of reaction, not out of error or lack of wit, but because it is a machine largely controlled by the super-rich, who are perfectly capable of understanding their own interests.

For all his spirited retorts to hucksters like David Brooks, Frank flinches from acknowledging the core of cold truth in their legends and demagogic stereotypes. In the recent Presidential election, the Democrats picked the wealthiest individual since George Washington ever to run for the White House as their candidate, outgunned the Republicans 59 to 41 per cent among donors with assets over \$10 million, outspent Bush in every swing state of the Union, and hit an all-time financial record

<sup>12</sup> *Kansas*, p. 243.

<sup>13</sup> *Kansas*, p. 245.

for a senatorial campaign: \$17 million in a failed attempt to get Daschle back on the Hill. Moreover, there is little that is new in this: since the nineties virtually all of the richest electoral districts in the country have been Democratic bastions, Clinton's cash-mountain easily topped Dole's in 1996, and the Democrats have regularly received larger individual donations than Republicans, whose strength has been among smaller donors. In this situation, workers who vote Republican may be less deluded than Frank seems to believe. Putting it in sociological language, since there is so little to choose 'instrumentally' between the two parties, each of them dedicated to capital unbound, why not at least get the satisfaction of voting 'expressively' for the one which seems to speak for their values, if not their interests?

If Frank sidesteps the political economy of the blue plutocracy, it is unlikely to be just out of tactical considerations. *What's the Matter with Kansas?* is a completely honourable book, free of any hint of the electoral pandering that has marred contributions like Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Rather, what seems to have happened is that as a former Republican youngster of the Reagan era, Frank has reacted by vaguely idealizing Democratic rulers of an earlier age. More than once he intimates that 'forty years ago', the party was still a beacon of enlightenment, and indeed even now he can write that 'it is the Democrats who are the party of the workers, the poor, of the weak and the victimized. Understanding this, we think, is part of the ABCs of adulthood'. The weak link in his book, which runs through it like a wistful refrain, uniting past and present, is the broken-backed notion of American liberalism. Though he concedes that 'liberalism deserves a large part of the blame for the backlash phenomenon', he does not explain why this should be so, or whether it has anything to do with the nature of the phenomenon itself, rather than simply its decline. But it is enough to note that Frank can write of 'the things liberalism once stood for—equality and economic security' to realize that we are in the realm of historical mythology. Wilson, Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy, Johnson champions of equality! They would be turning in their graves. The Democratic Party and its 'liberalism': the great tradition of the Palmer Raids, Nisei camps, Loyalty oaths, Agent Orange in Vietnam, assassinations in Africa and coups in Latin America, not to speak of the ferocious protection of capital at home and abroad.

What has changed in recent years is not some falling away from earlier high ideals, but the social environment in which the Democratic elites

were once able to dominate the political system by combining captive electorates of incompatible character in the South and North, as the very capitalism the party enthusiastically whipped forward eventually undermined its grip on white rural voters in a rapidly industrializing South, and atomized its black and worker constituencies in the North. The result today has been a fatal hollowing out of the party on the ground. Ward, precinct and county structures are shells—rotten ones, in much of the South. Blue-collar voters have learned that they have very little to gain from the party. Along with black church and community organizations, the unions still constitute the closest thing the Democrats have got to a local political machine, but they have been desperately weakened, not only numerically (down to 13 per cent of the workforce nationally, a mere 3 per cent in the South) and politically, but also as a space where working-class education and solidarity could unfold.

In Ohio, JoAnn Wypijewski has reported, the Democrats had serious organization in nine counties; the Republicans had it in all eighty-eight. Instead, Kerry's 'air war' bombarded the electorate from 30,000 feet. America Coming Together, MoveOn.org and the other 527s bussed in white college kids and paid mercenaries to rust-belt towns with double-digit unemployment and high ex-convict levels, not to stay and help organize around community issues but to sign up votes for Kerry and get out.<sup>14</sup> By contrast, the GOP has rebuilt itself nationally over the past decades and could mobilize nearly a million local party volunteers in 2004, with committees in over 3,000 US counties. Add to that the powerful conservative church organizations and it is easy to see why, with the electorate still more or less evenly divided, the Republicans can dominate all three branches of government.

Frank has offered some pungent advice to the Democrats in the wake of this debacle. Let us hope the next book this fine writer gives us will be as uncompromising a portrait of its massive edifice of sleaze and hypocrisy as he has provided for latter-day Republicans, without resort to the weasel L-word that is America's tarnished substitute for a Left. The two-fisted spirit of his feisty journal out of Chicago, the *Baffler*, is what a radical politics in the US most needs today.

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<sup>14</sup> JoAnn Wypijewski, 'The Wreckage', *Counterpunch*, vol. 11, no. 18, 24 Nov 2004.

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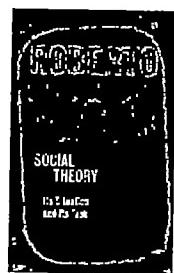
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## FORWARD MARCH OF HINDUTVA HALTED?

If, as Gramsci said, ‘the counting of “votes” is the final ceremony of a long process’—a process of persuasion and alliance-building—the 2004 Indian elections were an apparent anomaly for the Gramscian schema.<sup>1</sup> The surprise installation of the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance in New Delhi could be called neither final nor ceremonial. Rather, a grim new dynamic has entered the unfolding political developments of the last decades. The rise of Hindutva—authoritarian Hindu nationalism—and its party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, were central to these. The two successive National Democratic Alliance governments—coalitions of the BJP with the majority of the country’s regional parties—in 1998 and 1999 had constituted their climax. The 2004 verdict has now entwined the Congress within this vortex.

The NDA’s tenure witnessed a systematic ‘saffronization’ of state and civil society. The personnel, practices and philosophy of the BJP’s larger family of Hindutva organizations (the fascistic Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Sangh Parivar), were embedded within the country’s cultural and educational institutions, the media, politics and the economy. Although controversies raged—over history textbooks, the teaching of ‘Vedic Mathematics’ and astrology, prayers in schools, the promotion of the Hindu hymn ‘Vande Matram’ to equal status with the national anthem, and the replacements of members of regulatory bodies such as Prasar Bharti (in charge of broadcasting) with Hindutva acolytes—the scale of the changes ensured the prosecution of most without significant comment or resistance. While events such as the 2002 pogrom against Muslims in BJP-ruled Gujarat could arouse widespread outrage, media commentary and statements from the country’s political and industrial

leaders indicated a new conviviality between the BJP and the country's possessing classes. Flourishing Indian tv and Bombay's 'dream-factory' film industry, always an accurate political weathercock, celebrated high-caste Hindu values and barely gentrified anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistan sentiments. Those who had chalked Hindutva's political success up to its violent communal campaigns had to face the pervasiveness of these sentiments. No better confirmation of this could be found than the Congress's explicit adoption of 'soft Hindutva' themes in the late 1990s.

The surprise verdict of 2004 interrupted, rather than consummated, these processes—as though their author had suddenly remembered the unfinished business of the fate of Congress and recalled it into the narrative of Hindutva's rise; possibly for summary dispatch. Congress vaulted into government alright, but also into the crucible of a political system deeply transformed by Hindutva. Its future now depends on how the Congress deals with one simple fact: recent political developments have allotted it an electorate that consists overwhelmingly of the poor, the lower classes and castes, and the minorities. In some ways the Congress leadership recognizes this: for example, in its pro-poor, developmental and secularist election appeals.

Shouldn't the Congress then take the next logical step and become the authentic party—politically and programmatically—of the poor and the minorities: to rally the constituencies of the Left as a counter to the BJP's successful organization of the Right? Logical, perhaps, but unlikely. The Congress has rarely evinced the political will and ability to stand up to Hindutva and neoliberalism—indeed, the whole weight of Congress tradition militates against this. For its populist election appeals sit uneasily alongside a quite contrary desire to regain its position as the normal party of the bourgeoisie, a position from which it was rudely dislodged by the BJP. It is this desire that still orients the Congress's politics, ensuring that any recognition of new electoral realities remains only instrumental.

The Congress might yet acquire another, 'second-best' vocation in Indian politics: as an alternative to the BJP but not to Hindutva or neoliberalism,

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<sup>1</sup> *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, New York 1971, p. 192. I would like to thank Achin Vanaik for comments on an earlier draft. Remaining faults and inconsistencies are to be blamed on the fluidities of the political situation; and, of course, on me. All statistics are from the Election Commission of India, *Provisional Statistical Report on the General Elections, 2004 to the 14th Lok Sabha, vol. 1, National and State Abstracts and Detailed Results*: [www.eci.gov.in](http://www.eci.gov.in)

seeking only to soften their impact on its constituency sufficiently to win elections with reasonable regularity. The Congress might become a second bourgeois party alternating in power, much like the Democratic Party in the us. In this instance the two main rivals—the BJP and the Congress—would rally alternative multi-party coalitions. Even this limited ambition involves balancing opposing pressures: the desire to demonstrate to the predominantly Hindu propertied classes that the all-important ‘reforms’ are on track, and the assertion of their Hindu identity licensed, so as to detach them at least partially from Hindutva; and the need to deliver some reward to its vast, predominantly poor and minority electorate, while navigating the perils of minority government in a highly volatile situation. Failure will spell the Congress’s political end, bringing what I have elsewhere called the ‘long death of the Congress party’ to its tragic, but possibly merciful, conclusion. Formally the Congress party may live on, as other institutions that have lost their purpose, but not their resources or personnel, have done. But it would be a ghostly after-life whose prating course will only recall what once was and, perhaps, what might have been.

### *An ambivalent electorate*

For the surprise verdict was complex and fractured and has produced a deeply unstable situation for the UPA government. There are four main sources of instability. The electorate was ambivalent, neither enthusiastically endorsing the Congress, nor unambiguously repudiating the BJP’s communalism and neoliberalism. There was, secondly, the profound discomfiture of civil society—substantial non-state socio-economic powers, pre-eminently capital, but also saffronized individuals and institutions—at the formation of a minority coalition government supported by the Left. The Congress is anxious to allay this discomfiture, but cannot end it conclusively. Thirdly, some of the Congress’s allies in the UPA may be willing to contemplate coalitions with the BJP—indeed, a couple have done so in the past—raising the possibility of the UPA government being toppled by BJP-led political machinations at some ripe moment when it falters on an important policy matter. The Congress will then have failed to run a stable government, in contrast to the BJP’s proven ability to do so; a fatal blot on its copybook in a bourgeois republic intent on getting on with ‘good governance’ and ‘reform’. Finally, the Congress remains torn between its political soul, which yearns to be the normal party of the bourgeoisie, as it once was, and the new electoral

body of the lower classes, castes and minorities, victims of the communalism and neoliberalism of the BJP, which it has willy-nilly acquired. As if these pressures were not enough, a former US ambassador to India has already proclaimed that the UPA government could not be expected to last long. Enormously wealthy sections of the Non Resident Indian community exert great informal power in the Indian political system; they are organized predominantly by the Sangh Parivar, and not merely to hold nostalgic 'cultural' fêtes but to mobilize the émigré community's political influence on host-country governments, above all in Washington.

The 2004 result has been compared to the electoral upset of 1977, when the Indian electorate threw Indira Gandhi out of power after the Emergency; this time it had stopped the Hindutva juggernaut. But while 1977 was a major vindication of Indian democracy by an electorate that is all too often dismissed for its illiteracy and poverty, 2004 was another matter. The defeats of the BJP and the NDA were stunning. The BJP came nowhere near its swaggering estimates of a 300-plus majority and lost seats in spades, falling from 182 seats to 136, while the NDA as a whole dropped from about 320 to 189. However, the Congress victory was dubious. Despite a creditable campaign, with its emphasis on issues facing the poorer majority, indebted farmers in particular, the electorate—mindful no doubt of the Congress's usually empty rhetoric—was not much enthused. Turnout, at 58 per cent, was lower than in the last general election. The Congress won 145 seats in a house of 545, a little over a quarter. Although the Congress's alliances were designed to avoid splitting the anti-BJP and anti-NDA vote, and although its allies had some rather unprecedented electoral luck in two large states—Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, where the BJP and its regional allies performed spectacularly badly in terms of seats—the UPA commanded a mere 219 seats in the Lok Sabha. The Left, whose 62 seats in the new Lok Sabha are their highest tally ever, lends outside support to the UPA.

Furthermore, the Congress's seat gains conceal what is actually a reduced share of the vote. Congress supporters explained this away as an effect of its electoral alliances, which meant that it contested fewer seats. However, while it may have lost votes in the constituencies it left to its allies, Congress should have gained them in the seats it had to itself. Interestingly, both the Congress and the BJP lost exactly 1.8 per cent of the vote compared to 1999, with the BJP at 22.16 per cent and the Congress at 26.69 per cent in 2004. This too was interpreted in Congress's favour.

since it contested fewer seats, the reduction in its vote share was more understandable than the BJP's. But the Congress has always stood in far more seats; its claim to be the only national party, whether credible or, more recently, not, rested on contesting almost all the seats in the Lok Sabha. Even as it entered into alliances in 2004, finally accepting that it could not 'go it alone', the Congress contested 417 seats to the BJP's 364, and its own 453 in 1999. The Congress's absolutely higher vote share is surely the result of picking up votes in the vast majority of constituencies it loses. In the 2004 elections the Congress won 34.77 per cent of the seats it contested and the BJP, 37.91 per cent; corresponding figures for 1999 were 25.17 per cent and 33.69 per cent respectively.

This old grand party, whose dominance over the Indian political system was once legendary, must now be happy to form a government in such reduced circumstances. This pass in Indian politics is the result of political processes rooted in a class polarization effected by the progressive liberalization of economic policy, and accentuated by caste divisions which largely overlap with, and overdetermine, class divides. Although the sheer number of political parties—in 2004, the Election Commission listed a total of 233 parties, nearly three dozen of which won seats in the 14th Lok Sabha—threatens to defy any pattern, one can, in fact, be discerned. Three interrelated political developments are at stake: the long-term decline of the Congress, the rise of the regional parties and the emergence of the BJP as a major national party.

### *Congress's slow death*

Economic liberalization in India is usually dated from 1991 when, following a balance of payments crisis, the Congress government resorted to the IMF and the inevitable Structural Adjustment Programme. Others date it to 1984 and the Rajiv Gandhi administration's enthusiasm for unshackling market forces, and yet others to liberalizing initiatives of the 1977–80 Janata government. Reflecting an 'urban bias' inadmissible for a predominantly agricultural country like India, these accounts miss the decisive moment at which class-caste polarization accelerated sharply: the 'Green Revolution' in the late 1960s, implemented after the sabotage of Nehruvian egalitarian agricultural development by landed elites, compounded by a three-year drought and heavy pressure from the US. Later initiatives, liberalizing the urban and industrial sectors, accelerated this polarization. From the late 1960s the defection of the

Congress's middle-caste 'link-men' in the countryside became a central dynamic of the party system as the Congress became too limited a vehicle for their growing socio-economic and political aspirations. Two new forces—regional parties and the BJP—now gnawed at the bases of the Congress, though they gathered force and acquired political definition slowly, and in a complex pattern of advance and retreat.

The breakdown of the 'Congress System' was starkly indicated in the 1967 election. Congress numbers dwindled in the Lok Sabha and it lost control of 8 states, including large ones like Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The 1969 Congress split, which further centralized power within the party, only exacerbated the dissatisfactions of the middle-caste propertied groups. However, as late as the 1980s, Congress's decline appeared far from definitive. Its decades-long rule in New Delhi was broken for only three years after 1977, when the post-Emergency elections brought the Janata Party to power. Indira Gandhi was returned to office in 1980. In the 1984 election, held after her assassination, the Congress polled its highest vote and seat tally ever as a 'sympathy wave' washed over the country. But the underlying long-term trends pointed elsewhere. The 8th Lok Sabha was the last hurrah of single-party majority governments, Indira Gandhi's posthumous gift to party and country.

### *Rural exodus*

For by the time of the 1989 election, both the other trends had caught up with Congress decline. The BJP rose from two seats to eighty-seven, and the regional parties announced their arrival on the national political stage. Since the 1989 installation of V. P. Singh's National Front coalition of regional parties, the Indian system has yielded only minority or coalition governments.<sup>2</sup> Though both the Congress and the BJP lent support to the NF government, the emergence of these new political forces was particularly discomfiting to the Congress; it was clearly a function of the party's own decline. In 1991 the Congress withdrew its support, hoping

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<sup>2</sup> The category of 'regional parties' includes all parties based among local dominant-caste groups which are not Congress, the Left or parties of the Right. It does not include the Shiv Sena, a clearly right-wing political formation, and the Bahujan Samaj Party which, as a party of the former untouchables, is in a class by itself. It does include the Janata Dal which, in 1989, had the most seats in the Lok Sabha of all parties. It represented a political possibility that has since been aborted: a national party of the dominant-caste propertied who had been leaving Congress.

to benefit from anxieties about ‘stability’ among a national elite used to one-party majority governments. The Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress worked hard for a comeback. However, all Rajiv’s energetic campaigning—featuring the reduced security to allow him to get ‘closer to the people’ that contributed to his assassination during the campaign—and the significant sympathy vote after his death, were not enough to provide a majority. Narasimha Rao’s minority government managed to complete a full term, but not without the famous bribery scandal in which the prime minister was implicated in buying a small regional party’s support.

In 1996 the BJP emerged as the largest single party, with 162 seats, but failed to win the support of enough regional parties to form a government. The United Democratic Front governments of I. K. Gujral and H. D. Deve Gowda that ruled from 1996–98 were dubbed coalitions of ‘democratic and secular forces’ by the Left parties, who had orchestrated the Front to keep out the BJP. Labelling the regional parties ‘secular’ turned out to be wishful thinking, however, and following the mid-term elections of 1998, a majority of them formed a coalition with the BJP. From 1989 on, therefore, the regional parties had emerged as major players; they had become arbitrators of the character and fate of national governments.

The exodus of propertied middle-caste groups from the Congress had initially taken the form of farmers’ parties and movements. But as increasing numbers of middle-caste farmers acquired interests and investments in the urban and industrial economies, their character underwent a subtle but significant change. By the 1980s, as these groups were transformed from agricultural to provincial bourgeoisies, with investments spanning rural and urban sectors, the regional parties more accurately expressed their interests. Agitation for the implementation of the Mandal Commission Report, recommending quotas for middle castes in state institutions—the issue on which the regional parties made their debut on the national stage in 1989—was the clearest signal of the urban ambitions of the so-recently-rural, middle-caste propertied elite.

### *Class plus caste*

The clash between agricultural and industrial interests seemed poised to be the principal political conflict in the 1970s, as farmers’ parties shrilly invoked ‘urban bias’ and ‘*Bharat* versus India’. What remained by the late 1980s, however, was a competition, no more, for state resources,

between a predominantly urban and upper-caste national big bourgeoisie and an array of largely middle-caste regional bourgeoisies whose main focus was the control of state governments. Competition could also become collaboration, as the NDA coalitions of regional parties and the BJP demonstrated.

To left and liberal commentators, the willingness of regional parties (which they had dubbed secularist as late as 1996) to truck with Hindutva appeared merely opportunist. But their pacts had a sound political lineage, dating back to the 'non-Congressism' of the 1960s, when the precursors of the regional forces, the Socialists in particular, made alliances with the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the then party of Hindutva, to defeat Congress candidates in by-elections. This tradition culminated in the Janata Party of 1977–80. Put simply, it too was a coalition between right-wing parties—the BJS and the rump Congress O—and the precursors of today's regional parties: the Socialists and the Lok Dal of Charan Singh, the most articulate advocate of India's agricultural bourgeoisie. The issue which eventually ended the Janata experiment was the Socialists' envy of the BJS's exclusive access to the cadres and organizational power of the RSS. Interestingly, a quarter of a century later the matter has been settled entirely in the BJP's favour: it retains this exclusive access, the regional forces are resigned to this and little stands in the way of political accommodation between the two.

While explicit political coalitions have been forced upon Hindutva in parts of the country where the middle castes formed parties of their own, elsewhere the BJP has been able to absorb the propertied middle castes directly. In these states, the BJP is already what it hopes to be in the country as a whole: a social coalition of the upper-caste and middle-caste propertied. The BJP's recent political rise owes everything to this. Confined to the upper castes, it would have got nowhere: they are simply too scanty and useless for political advance in the countryside. The Congress lost support among the upper-caste propertied to the BJP; the middle-caste propertied deserted it either for the BJP or for regional parties. When these two forces came together in the NDA in 1998, they arguably formed a more stable expression of the caste-class polarization, of which the Congress, as a cross-class, cross-caste party, had been the victim. The NDA was, quite simply, the coalition of the propertied. It pursued their interests—economic and cultural—brazenly and uncompromisingly.

Until 2004 the Congress reacted to these inexorable, if slow, developments by clinging ever tighter to its image, itself fading, as the country's dominant party. Unwilling to face up to political realities, loath to have any truck with regional deserters and competitors, it stuck to a 'go-it-alone' strategy, willing to resort to any fix to make it work, including adopting 'soft Hindutva' themes at its infamous Panchmarhi meeting in 1998. If an even worse electoral performance in 1999 and the NDA's success finally led it, with some prodding from the Left, to enter the alliance game, a late start was only the first of its handicaps. The Congress has far fewer allies than the BJP, and those it does have are exceptions to the pattern outlined above. Either they are from very poor states, such as Bihar, where the middle castes remain, socio-economically and ritually, too distant from the upper castes to contemplate coalitions with Hindutva. Or they come from states where the system of regionalization is so complete that there are two or more major regional parties, one of whom must ally with Congress, as with Tamil Nadu's Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and Pattali Makkal Katchi. Or, in a variation, the Nationalist Congress Party of Maharashtra, which has to compete with the Shiv Sena for the middle-caste vote. (The other parties in the current UPA coalition all have less than six seats.)

Either by populist means or, in the case of the BJP, more violent and corrupt ones, both the regional parties and the BJP manage to win support among the poor of all social categories; Hindutva's intimidating and manipulative practices in the tribal belt from Eastern Gujarat to Orissa and the North-east are particularly notorious. These tactics are all the more successful because the lower socio-economic strata have known nothing but populist promises, and their repeated betrayal, from the other main political force in the country, the Congress. The vast majority of India's poor have had no real—consistent and principled—political representation at all and the Left remains regionally quarantined. But they have registered their dissatisfaction with neoliberalism nevertheless: all the governments since the mid 1980s have pursued the neoliberal agenda, and all have been rejected by the electorate.

### *Regional outcomes*

Against this background, the outcome of Congress's late capitulation to the necessity of regional alliances emerges more clearly. Congress's allies brought in 74 seats, and 9.1 per cent of the vote. Overall, the UPA's

219 seats and 35.8 per cent of the vote compare badly with the NDA's approximately 320 seats and 40.1 per cent. Regional parties also won a few more seats, benefiting from alliance with the Congress. However, with the good fortunes of the Congress's allies balanced out by the bad fortunes of some of the BJP's allies, the tally of regional seats was 164, up by only thirteen from the last Lok Sabha, and well below their record 171 seats in 1989.

Practically all the regional parties in the UPA contested fewer seats than they had in the previous election—the Telangana Rashtra Samiti in Andhra Pradesh was the exception—and managed to win more. They also increased their vote shares in their home states. The BJP's allies, with the single exception of the Janata Dal United in Karnataka, contested the same number of seats or close to them, indicating the stability of the NDA. While only two of the BJP's major allies (the Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab and the Biju Janata Dal in Orissa) won more seats than in 1999, and while two others (the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in Tamil Nadu, and the Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh) lost them spectacularly, most won a higher share of the vote than in 1999: the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, the JD<sub>U</sub> in Bihar and the SAD in Punjab.

In the long run, the relationship between the BJP and its regional allies is bound to be uneasy, simply because the only way the BJP can advance as a right-wing party is to plunder their social base among the middle-caste propertied. That it can do so is clear from its success in Gujarat. In the immediate future, however, the BJP will be obliged to curb such ambitions, to bide its time until the bad blood between the Congress and the regional parties does its work. Nevertheless, in two small northern states, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, and one large southern one, Karnataka, regional parties once allied to the BJP were eliminated and the party systems simplified into straight BJP–Congress contests. The BJP was the victor in Karnataka and the Congress in the other two.

On the whole such simplification was bad news for the Congress. In states already featuring straight Congress–BJP contests in 2004—Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan—the Congress swept only Delhi, and won only 27 seats in these states compared to the BJP's 71. Congress's alliances worked best in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and in Bihar, where the BJP lost the largest

chunks of seats and votes against the combined forces of the Congress, the RJD and the Left. The pattern was very complex in Uttar Pradesh, where both Congress and the BJP lost seats to the Samajwadi Party: as with Bihar, a combination of low economic development and acute caste divides has forestalled any alliance between the regional parties and the BJP. The Samajwadi Party, however, did not join the UPA largely due to the sharpness of its electoral competition with the Congress on the ground. The large Muslim electorate in UP, which nurses a sense of betrayal since the Babri Mosque was destroyed under the Congress's watch in 1992, is a major factor in this competition.

### *Rejection of communalism?*

If the magnitude of the Congress victory shrinks under scrutiny, so do the defeats of the BJP and NDA. The general analysis of the BJP's defeat focuses on the hubris of its 'India Shining' campaign which rang hollow amidst unemployment, poverty and debt. The sentiments of the better-off were not endorsed by ordinary voters. However, despite the BJP's massively reduced number of seats, the decline of its vote share was exactly the same as that of the Congress. Most of its chief allies held on to, or significantly increased, their vote shares within their own states.<sup>3</sup> If there was a wave of state-level 'anti-incumbency', this also affected the Congress. It appears that the electorate regarded the two opposing alliances as tweedledum and tweedledee, and registered no clear verdict against communalism and neoliberalism.

The question of whether the 2004 election results represented a rejection of the politics of Hindutva drew attention to the Congress's performance in Gujarat—up to 12 seats against the BJP's 14, from its mere 5 in the 1999 election. However, the claim that this was a 'victory for secularism'—the Gujarati electorate rejecting the politics of violence and communalism after the events of February and March 2002—is questionable. When the Congress lost badly in the state assembly elections

<sup>3</sup> Respectively: the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu (29 per cent compared to 26 per cent in 1999), the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra (20 compared to 17 per cent), the JDU in Bihar (22 compared to 21 per cent), the SAD in Punjab (34 compared to 28 per cent) and the BJD in Orissa (33 compared to 30 per cent). Only two of its major allies did worse in terms of vote share than in 1999: the TDP in Andhra Pradesh (31 compared to 40 per cent), and the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal (21 compared to 26 per cent).

of 2002, many interpreted the results as a 'harvest of hate'. The reality was more worrying. The Election Commission had overruled the Modi government's desire to hold the state elections immediately after the riots, permitting them only when, in its judgement, the situation had stabilized. And the BJP would have won even without its gains in the riot-torn areas. In fact, the 2002 election result represented the deep and relatively stable hegemonization of Gujarat by Hindutva, which the Congress had already conceded by taking a 'soft saffron' line and not making the violence into an issue.

The Congress's improved performance in the 2004 General Elections was explained by this being the first 'normal' election in Gujarat for years. The BJP had no communal issue to rake up and suffered accordingly. But the Congress also suffered a loss in its vote share on a *reduced* turnout. The combined vote of the Congress and the NCP was less than that of the Congress alone in 1999. The Congress's 2004 performance in Gujarat reflected a series of temporary and local disaffections from the BJP. To the high alienation among party workers, and dissatisfaction with the BJP for its corruption and incompetence, were added the intransigence of the Modi government on the hike in the electricity tariff, disastrous for farmers dependent on pumping groundwater in drought-prone northern Gujarat, and the fact that Modi's highhandedness and authoritarianism had created a revolt among BJP MLAs.

### *Saffron Sensex*

As the surprise election result became clear, Vajpayee tendered his resignation, setting the stage for an unprecedented coup. The people had given their verdict, capital now had to have its turn. Sonia Gandhi's foreign origin became an issue and was settled curiously. It was not the Black Flag days organized by the Sangh Parivar, not the posturing threats of symbolic mourning by Hindutva's leading harridans, but the calculated tantrum of the financial markets which decided—or rather, was allowed to decide—the issue.

The Indian capitalist class may be senior, indeed, practically venerable, among the bourgeoisies of the Third World, and it may have benefited from liberalizing economic policies under practically every administration since the late 1970s. But the NDA governments presided over such a massive dose of the most brazen and unapologetic liberalization as to

constitute a virtual rebirth for the capitalist class, sired by the BJP. Indian capitalists' new filial loyalty cannot be underestimated.

The NDA oversaw a vast and ungrudging expansion of practically every sector of the urban industrial economy: finance and financial markets, the media, housing and construction, consumer durables and non-durables of every kind. Privatization was accelerated, giving a great fillip to stock markets; the foreign exchange regime was further liberalized; FDI and portfolio investments, including by foreign institutional investors, FIIs, flowed in. Consumer credit to finance lifestyles of international standards (indeed, better, thanks to the cheapness of domestic labour) for a small but very visible stratum of those in business and the professions was expanded and liberalized, as was the import regime. The tax burden on the rich was reduced; innumerable small quotas and restrictions on economic activity were lifted; the IT sector boomed, employing thousands of young professionals and arousing unprecedented hopes of upward mobility among thousands of others; and, not least, the objective of closer ties between India and its wealthy 'diaspora' in the metropoles was pursued by taking the first steps toward granting dual citizenship. All talk of the poor and of larger social goals was dismissed routinely as the leftover cant of yesterday's 'licence-permit raj'. It was truly a dream government for the possessing classes.

Needless to say, the effects of these measures on the whole economy were less than spectacular and, on the poor majority, positively disastrous. More than ever, the NDA governments created two nations in India, already home to some of the starker divides between poverty and wealth. Every criticism from the Left had its counterpart in appreciation on the part of the rich, and there is no doubt about a feel-good factor among the propertied elite and foreign interests in India: in fact, an overwhelming pro-BJP sentiment. When opinion polls first indicated an NDA and BJP defeat in late April, before the multi-phase election was complete, the stock markets crashed, wiping out Rs. 55,000 crores (\$12bn) on 27 April 2004 alone. This sentiment went far beyond neoliberal economic policies. The Hindu propertied classes did not merely tolerate Hindutva for the benefits of neoliberalism but have actively supported it. Numerous journalists and intellectuals have made its nostrums quite mainstream. Hindutva provides a new, more aggressive identity on the global stage, one which can be mobilized domestically against 'enemies within'. While no one openly supported the violence and gangsterism of the Sangh Parivar—

not even the Parivar, which usually portrays such actions as unfortunate consequences of the 'legitimate' frustrations of 'the people'—there was an element of smug satisfaction in a politics that shows minorities and other 'vocal special interests' their place. That it can be done while trumpeting Hinduism's 'tolerance' is an added bonus: 'India is secular because it is Hindu'. Double-speak with double advantages.

The markets crashed at the prospect of Sonia Gandhi becoming Prime Minister and settled down after the announcement that Manmohan Singh would replace her. The issue was not primarily the nature of the economic policies which the new government would pursue. Despite campaigning on pro-poor issues in the dusty sun-baked streets, Sonia Gandhi had been at pains to assure the capitalist and middle classes in plush venues that the reform process—initiated by her late husband, she reminded them—would continue. Nevertheless, the BJP has so managed to install itself in the hearts of India's propertied classes that they were not just disappointed by the party's electoral performance, they were downright angry—not so much at the party, but at the electorate. The apocryphal story about the response of an English society lady to the Labour Party's 1945 landslide comes to mind: 'They have elected a Labour government and the country will never stand for it!' Of course, 'they' had given no such resounding victory to the Congress and 'the country' could feel all the more justified in its rage.

### *Pacifying the markets*

The message of the markets to New Delhi was simple: a government that was so reliant on Left support must show its respect for their wishes from the beginning. The foreign origin of Sonia Gandhi was a matter which the markets—and the social, economic and political powers who operate through them—considered a worthwhile one on which to demand a symbolic concession from the Congress Party. That the Congress capitulated is more significant than the demand itself: the collapse of the Sensex was no index of economic 'confidence' or lack thereof, even among the tiny portion of the capitalist classes who dabble in it, but a political demonstration. A Congress party which was serious about reversing or even slowing many of the NDA government's neoliberal economic reforms should have been expected to stand up to such meaningless bullying, to tough it out. Instead it chose to pacify the propertied in the throes of their tantrum.

Sonia Gandhi was lionized for forsaking the prime ministership, undeservedly, as it turned out. Within days she emerged as the Chairperson for the Congress Parliamentary Party with the power to appoint the Prime Minister, effectively an *éminence grise* behind the throne. The braver choice would have been to face down the idea that her origins had anything to do with her right to be Prime Minister, in line with a recent Supreme Court decision. Congress would have established from the start that it would not cave in to gratuitous pressure. But it was deemed more important to give in, *and be seen to have given in*, to the country's most powerful groups.

Congress has followed this dubious opening gambit with further electorally suicidal behaviour, showing that its anxiety to placate the possessing classes may well overpower its need to consolidate its support base among the poor. The UPA government's first budget of July was practically a reiteration of the NDA's Interim Budget of February, if not worse. Restrictions on foreign ownership were eased in telecoms, insurance and civil aviation. Defence expenditure was increased from the Rs. 66,000 crores (\$14.5bn) earmarked for it in the Interim Budget to Rs. 77,000 crores (\$17bn). Except for a 2 per cent cess on all taxes to be used for elementary education, there were no new revenue measures. The meagre reallocation of spending towards agriculture and the only major allocation towards promises set out in the Common Minimum Programme—Rs. 10,000 crores (\$2.2bn) towards rural employment generation—were both predicated on an over-optimistic projection of the proceeds from arrears-collection.

Left economists have argued that rural employment generation is the keystone of a viable and realistic anti-neoliberal strategy for economic growth. It is also the best hope for consolidating the Congress's support by making a material, if modest, improvement in the lives of the rural poor. The cost of providing 100 days of guaranteed employment to members of all poor rural households has been estimated at between Rs. 44,000 crores and Rs. 53,000 crores—around \$10 billion.<sup>4</sup> The allocation of a measly Rs. 10,000 crores, itself dependent on an optimistic revenue estimate, is hardly an encouraging sign that the Congress is serious about consolidating support among the poor.

<sup>4</sup> Jayati Ghosh, *Frontline*, 3 July 2004.

UPA foreign policy has also followed Hindutva's lead. Even without an ideological commitment to being Washington's regional gendarme, the UPA has accepted this role as the diplomatic and political part of the package of closer ties to the US in which the economic benefits to India's propertied classes are paramount. Thus, it has not halted the trend of military and civilian collaboration with Israel which, under the NDA, replaced India's historic support for the Palestinian cause. In early November it joined the EU in hailing the 'full restoration' of sovereignty in Iraq. Indeed, apart from a limited desaffronization in the form of high-profile replacements of a few top officials, including four state governors close to the RSS, the UPA government has so far trodden much the same path as the NDA.

The Congress needs to find a workable middle way between its electoral promises and its desire to prove itself to the country's propertied classes. Even the limited goal of emerging as the centre-left party of the bourgeoisie may not be within reach if it continues to sacrifice the most minimal interests of its electorate to those of property. Caught, as it were, between wife and mistress—between its electoral base among the poor and its desire for the approbation of the upper- and middle-caste Hindu propertied groups—Congress faces its most severe test as a political entity. And its early actions seem to augur no reconciliation with those who have brought it to power. Rather they evince a probably fruitless pining for a mistress who has lately favoured the attentions of a much more macho lover.

### *Parliamentary re-engineering*

Most regional parties have worked with the BJP in the past, and may do so again. The Congress's relations with them tend to be fraught, particularly during elections when the local units of the Congress and the various regional parties must vie for the same electoral turf. These local tensions are quickly transmitted to the Congress High Command, thanks to a skimpy organization and centralized functioning. How the Congress coalition will fare in coming months, with many state assembly elections due, therefore remains an open question. The vote in Maharashtra in September gave a foretaste of things to come: although the Congress–NCP alliance emerged victorious over the BJP and Shiv Sena on a small swing of the vote, the NCP won more seats despite contesting fewer, emerging as the senior partner in the alliance and staking its

claim on the Chief Ministership—invoking an implicit understanding that the larger party would have the post. The Congress countered this by arguing that it commanded not only its own seats but also the three seats of the CPM, and that the allies had won thanks to the electorate's desire to support parties friendly to the UPA at the centre, this latter being identified with Congress. The row not only delayed the formation of the state government, but raised questions about whether the Congress's claims to seniority can survive many more such results.

If the BJP's shock defeat were not enough, almost immediately upon its heels leaders of fraternal organizations within the Sangh Parivar launched what appeared to be a campaign against it, accusing it of abandoning the Hindutva message and even threatening to launch a new party. However, it may be unwise to derive much satisfaction from these events: as a party of the right the BJP needs these cadres to win elections but still finds them, at times, an embarrassing constraint on its desire to function as a party of the bourgeoisie. It is this contradiction that had to be played out, in full public view, if the cadres were to have their piece of flesh. The appearance of disarticulation is necessary as the RSS and the VHP work to buttress sagging morale while the BJP attempts, amidst this, to function as a parliamentary opposition. Certainly the BJP has moved with alacrity to exploit every political blunder of the Congress. Already five major lines of attack have emerged. The first was its accusation that there are two and maybe even three centres of power in the new government: the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party and the Left. This theme combines with another: that the Congress is merely the vehicle of the dynastic power of the Nehru-Gandhi family.

A second, related, criticism was that the Congress would not be able to manage the progress of the reforms process as the BJP had, not only because it is incompetent to do so, but also because of its contrary campaign promises and dependence on Left support. The Congress would not be vulnerable to this criticism if it took the Common Minimum Programme more seriously—as the blueprint of its political reorientation towards those who have voted for it. Since it does not, BJP criticism will resonate among the already anxious constituency of the upper and middle-caste propertied who form the social base of the BJP, and the majority of the regional parties, while its own allies and the Left will be unable to defend its economic policies in the name of an alternative vision. A third line of attack is that the government, which has promised

to repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act, is being soft on terrorism, and on Pakistan. Congress must evince no deficit of zeal in pursuing India's interests abroad.

Fourthly, predictably but possibly quite correctly, it is being argued that the UPA government cannot be expected to provide stability and will not complete its full term, a prediction which the BJP has a great investment in seeing proved true. Finally, the Congress-led government incurred the accusation that it is behaving in unconstitutional ways. This last was brought on by the Congress's ham-handed dismissal of the governors of four states who were close to the BJP. Memories of the Emergency declared by Indira Gandhi will surely be invoked, and they will have a ring of truth: the Congress has a historical record of abusing the machinery of the state when its political hold over the country and government appears less than secure. This is not to say that the BJP's record has been cleaner on this matter. But in the educated middle-class constituency among whom this accusation will chiefly resonate, Congress can be expected to be judged more harshly than the BJP. Moreover, since it is the Congress which is the declining force and the BJP the rising one, such accusations will ring truer for the Congress in any case.

The BJP will not miss any chance to criticize the government in a long process of 'constructive dismissal'—and through this process, it will seek to persuade some of the regional parties in the UPA to come over to its side. The RJD, Congress's largest and most important ally, may be relied upon not to abandon it, and the Left's support can also be expected to continue. Despite Left noises made about the UPA's need to adhere to the Common Minimum Programme—really just a fig-leaf to cover its support for a neoliberal government—the Left's choices are limited. But the Left and the RJD alone do not give the UPA a majority in the Lok Sabha. That the exact form any future parliamentary re-engineering may take cannot be predicted does not negate its real possibility.

### *Political soullessness*

In addition to the long-term political trends tracked here, the Congress faces two major obstacles. The first is, quite simply, that the Congress as an organization really does not exist on the ground. Congress politicians as a breed are out of sorts when out of office because there is no wider ideology to which the Congress binds them. Without a structure and

identity which permits some minimal long-term adherence and stabilizes its relationship with its regional allies, even the modest ambition of becoming a second bourgeois party in a two-party system will be difficult to realize.

The second is that the Congress leadership has become too habituated to exercising autocratic power within the party. Congress has always had two distinct elements: a socially and culturally sophisticated High Command, for too long the Nehru-Gandhi family and the coterie around it, for whom commitment to high ideals such as development, secularism and equality are merely badges which mark their gentility, and thus social superiority, over the other main element of the party, the largely middle- and now lower-caste politicians who form its base at state level and bring in the votes. It has been the fate of the Congress that this relationship could not be managed once the aspirations and ambitions of the middle-caste elements led them, bit after regional bit, out of the party. The High Command's low tolerance for politicians within and outside the party who have solid regional bases of support has not increased. And, in so far as the Congress has now become the party of an even lower socio-economic stratum, the social and cultural distance between the local and state leaderships of the Congress on the one hand and the national centre on the other has only widened. In these circumstances, High Command authoritarianism can only be expected to heighten.

In order to provide a stable coalition government, the Congress will have to keep a tight rein on the various regional parties which have demonstrated more than once their political fickleness and openness to Hindutva. It cannot do this without demonstrating to them that it has, or means to acquire, post-haste, the political substance which it so badly lacks. Only if the Congress manages to become in government what it has not been hitherto—a party able to secure its hold over the classes and groups which provided the electoral arithmetic of its power—will it acquire, *ex-post facto*, the legitimacy that will make it difficult to topple and which may yet give it further terms in power.

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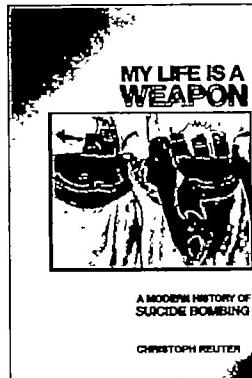
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DAVID SIMPSON

## POLITICS AS SUCH?

**F**RANCIS MULHERN IS, among his many other gifts, an astute analyst of style, of the little tics that give away an agenda at the level of the unconscious, the defensive retraction or qualification of what an argument appears to be specifying as its first order of affirmation. So the claim to 'emancipatory change' made by Cultural Studies—the object of Mulhern's critique in his *Culture/Metaculture* and the topic of a series of recent exchanges in this journal—is for him signalled by its preference for versions of the descriptive-imperative phrase *no longer*.<sup>1</sup> Stuart Hall, who comes as close as anyone discussed in the book (but not quite close enough) to resisting an overvaluation of Cultural Studies, is prone to a 'thickness of modification' that does the opposite of what it seems to do: it is a way of 'not coming to the point' and is thereby 'the deceptive figure of theoretical evasion'. He is given to 'compulsive temporalization of logic, which grants to discursive shifters like *now* and *no longer* the status of truth-tests' and indicates 'a perspective in which novelty has become a value in itself and even an autonomous cultural force'.

Mulhern also astutely takes the measure of his interlocutor and critic Stefan Collini's relentlessly well-mannered accumulation of subjunctive and subordinate clauses, recently offered in these pages as the voice of sweet persuasion: the rhetoric of accommodating man in his conviction that no one is immune to the appeal of conversation and good feeling. Collini's somewhat unconvincing claim that he and Mulhern 'both seem drawn to a similar tone or writerly stance in discussing these matters, including a taste for certain kinds of intellectual irony', could not and did not fail to draw Mulhern into an articulation of some of their prominent differences.<sup>2</sup> Collini is for him the celebrant of 'voice', one for whom 'utterance rather than statement' is the priority of analysis, the devotee and practitioner of an essayistic style that eschews anything that might be

taken for an absolute and who uses biographical foundations to embed all positions in the complex and overdetermined conditions of real life. The model is conversational, 'favouring shared over contested values' and assuming the actual or potential existence of a 'company' of fellow spirits. For Collini, according to Mulhern, 'ideas count for less than the voices that circulate them and the sensibilities that vary their texture'.<sup>3</sup>

### *Practice and praxis*

Next and predictably comes Collini's pointedly titled rejoinder which remarks, rather disingenuously, that 'something about my writing frustrates and irritates Mulhern', something that leads him to respond in a way that 'does not advance the argument'.<sup>4</sup> Collini, modestly declaring himself 'less confident and less settled about the direction of my thinking than Mulhern seems to have been from a comparatively early age', then builds towards a resonant defence of conviviality and conversation as critical tactics that may risk 'apparent lack of focus or of theoretical force' but which finally do better justice to the rich texture of a world which is for him best reflected in 'a cluttered, medium-range zone of engagement in which serious public debate takes place' using 'all the resources at hand'. The mode is indeed one of conversation, and the enemy is—guess who—theory, acceptable to Collini as a team player on a large roster but not as a referee. Everyone is a player, nobody makes the rules, and the game never ends. This is what Collini calls a 'practice', a term that both absorbs and deflects the more confrontational *praxis* that lurks behind Mulhern's argument, in its ghosting of the prospect for more decisive interventions than can be contained in merely ongoing conversations.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Francis Mulhern, *Culture/Metaculture*, London and New York 2000, pp. 162, 127, 118. On pp. 114–5 Mulhern discusses the context in which this aspect of Hall's work took shape—the 'New Times' debates in *Marxism Today*, which focused on the cultural shifts accompanying the move to a mode of production that was no longer Fordist. See also Stefan Collini, 'Culture Talk', *NLR* 7, January–February 2001; Francis Mulhern, 'Beyond Metaculture', *NLR* 16, July–August 2002; Collini, 'Defending Cultural Criticism', *NLR* 18, November–December 2002; Mulhern, 'What is Cultural Criticism?', *NLR* 23, September–October 2003; and Collini, 'On Variousness; and on Persuasion', *NLR* 27, May–June 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Collini, 'Defending Cultural Criticism', p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> Mulhern, 'What is Cultural Criticism?', pp. 43–9.

<sup>4</sup> Collini, 'On Variousness', p. 77.

<sup>5</sup> Collini, 'On Variousness', pp. 79, 95, 96–7.

Collini's defence of conversation as critical practice (and vice versa) ends a protracted exchange wherein the matter of style came more and more to the forefront, as not only a persistent area of friction but also a big part of the substance of the various disagreements on show. Both Mulhern and Collini are successful and persuasive practising intellectuals. They write books, reviews and high-end journalism for others like themselves. They are also teachers in university classrooms. Their style is their trademark, the personalized profile they project as the bearer of their meanings and intentions and as the substance of what it is that their students might choose to model themselves upon. Style, that is to say, figures as an important tool in their work, and embodies their image in their workplace. This is how it is for intellectuals. Arguments about style have been intense at least since the British reception of Kant and Hegel, and in the aggressive reaction to them adopted by the common-sense philosophers and, thereafter, though to different ends, the 'ordinary language' movement. Difficulty of style was famously, for Adorno, a weapon for demystifying a corrupted communications culture based on mass media and on ideology masquerading as common language. Some years ago, a brilliant essay by Terry Eagleton pinpointed Jameson's style as a purposive, dislocated medium 'estranging but not parodying its object' while 'refusing at once the chimera of a "degree zero" political discourse and the allures of the commodified "art sentence".<sup>6</sup> More recently we have had the journal *Philosophy and Literature* berating Judith Butler as the high priestess of obscurity by giving her the fourth of their bad writing awards. This had the partial virtue of eliciting a very sensible response from a range of writers showing that there is a long history of debates about bad writing, and that obscurity is often at the heart of short sentences made up of words with few syllables.<sup>7</sup>

All of the previous winners of this absurd award have been theorists (Jameson, Roy Bhaskar, Homi Bhabha), all are of the left. The Mulhern-Collini exchange has a place in this story. Collini is of course much too knowing to accuse Mulhern of an infelicitous style, but his distrust of the final judgement to which much of Mulhern's argument aspires is palpable throughout. And in refusing the gratifications of conviviality

<sup>6</sup> Terry Eagleton, 'Fredric Jameson: The Politics of Style', in *Against the Grain: Essays 1975–1985*, London 1986, pp. 67, 69.

<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Culler and Kevin Lamb, eds, *Just Being Difficult? Academic Writing in the Public Arena*, Stanford 2003. See especially the essays by Margaret Ferguson, Robin Valenza, John Bender and Culler himself.

Mulhern is true to a legacy most vividly embodied for English readers in the figure of Althusser in the 1970s and 1980s, an intimidating and uncompromising scientism that threatened to pinpoint ideological affiliations and political lapses with unforgiving clarity. This was for E. P. Thompson one among the povertyes of theory, evident in his critique of Althusser's 'absurd syllogistic world' and in his own counterclaim that 'history knows no regular verbs'. Thompson's falsely modest embrace of an 'English idiom' allowing for, perhaps, 'too much sensibility mixed up with my thought' is in a long tradition of British reactions to French rational sense that begins at least with Descartes and takes on definitive form in Edmund Burke's infamous and formative denunciations of French theory after 1789. Thompson's case against 'the project of Grand Theory—to find a total systematized conceptualisation of all history and human occasions', which he takes to be 'the original heresy of metaphysics against knowledge' stands fully in the tradition of Burke, even though it is deployed in the service of more compassionate social and political ends. Like Burke on the British Jacobins, Thompson saw in the Althusserians the storm troops of an 'ideological police action' and thus mistook a fight within the left for a diagnosis of systemic political power: neither the Jacobins in the 1790s nor the Althusserians in the 1970s ever had any real prospect of policing Britain, and to accuse them of such was effectively to carry forward the work of the right-wing scaremongers.<sup>8</sup>

### *Dissolving the political*

In revisiting this history, surely familiar to many as it is unrecalled by others, I do not mean to propose a seamless continuum of unacknowledged conflict over the political affiliations and consequences of style, nor to suggest that Collini–Mulhern is a simple rematch of Thompson–Althusser. Collini is much too unruffled an interlocutor to pass for Thompson, who was often a fiery polemicist, and Mulhern, with his appealing sense of humour, could only pass as a very urbane Althusserian. I do however want to make clear that there is a long durational identity to the strife between propositional and conversational languages in the attribution of any kind of politics to the work of intellectuals and teachers. This remains the case in Collini's carefully worded periphrases and deliberate digressions (the stuff of one kind of conversation), and in

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<sup>8</sup> E. P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays*, London and New York 1978, pp. 28, 46, iii, 111, 183. See also David Simpson, *Romanticism, Nationalism and the Revolt Against Theory*, Chicago and London 1993.

Mulhern's eye for the syntactic back of the net.<sup>9</sup> Collini's style suggests an affiliation with the widely circulating company of Habermasian liberals who have argued for dialogic and conversational paradigms as the bearers of achievable consensus and the happy mechanisms of non-statist civil societies: a round-table model of self-governance that can only, in our given world, fulfil itself in small-group situations. When this model proposes to describe the whole, it is either utopian (as it often is for Habermas himself) or visibly ideological—a way of limiting discussion to a few qualified and polite persons. It is a talk shop, with unspoken limits on who gets to talk. This brings me to my title, which is a citation of one of Francis Mulhern's most persistent stylistic habits, an intensifying noun phrase that recurs at critical points in his argument and marks the limit of Cultural Studies and the crossover into something more respectable and desirable: *politics as such*.

'It is politics as such that is fundamentally in question here', we are told. The same 'politics as such' is what Leavis was crucially alienated from and what is denied by *Kulturkritik* (I will come back to this term). Along with politics as such comes 'political reason itself' and 'political reason proper'.<sup>10</sup> These are the things Mulhern finds threatened or denied by Cultural Studies, in its shadow life as the modern agent of *Kulturkritik*. Both are guilty of a 'metacultural will to authority', which aims to 'dissolve the political as locus of general arbitration in social relations' and to 'mobilize "culture" as a principle' in its place.<sup>11</sup> One cannot but sympathize with Mulhern's case against the shoddy assumption that to celebrate the agency of popular or other culture as politically transformative in and of itself (one kind of Cultural Studies) is indeed to ascribe far too much power to a mere discipline in the circumscribed world of university teaching. (There is of course another kind which tends to the reverse position: that all popular culture is ideologically corrupt.) Mulhern is out to nail the assumption that culture is the most densely saturated vehicle of politics, that it matters more than any other form of politics, and that those who teach and study culture may therefore be the high priests of a brave new world. Here he is very much in line with, for example, Terry Eagleton in his recent *After Theory*, which berates a specifically American Cultural Studies for its narcissistic shrinkage of

<sup>9</sup> A different address can be traced in Terry Eagleton's predilection for a Monty Pythonesque bestiary of wombats, weasels and the poisoned mongoose—like my football imagery, an attempt at the demotic.

<sup>10</sup> Mulhern, *Culture/Metaculture*, pp. xix, 17 (Leavis), 148 (*Kulturkritik*), xxi, 67.

<sup>11</sup> 'Beyond Metaculture', p. 86.

politics to identity politics, and praxis to the college classroom; as if to intone the name of Toni Morrison were to disseminate revolution.

But what then *is* the politics of the classroom? Mulhern's 'politics as such' is explained as a practical engagement with local conditions and an attempt to 'determine the totality of social relations in a given space'; and as a 'theory and practice of synopsis' oriented to either 'maintenance or transformation'—conservative of the current order in the first case and revolutionary in the second. 'Culture is everywhere; politics can be anywhere' but is not necessarily so.<sup>12</sup> It is odd, then, to find so few specific examples of places where politics as such *is* connected with culture.<sup>13</sup> Despite Mulhern's declaration that his analysis is purely 'formal in character', and does nothing to pre-empt particular identifications, his complete silence on the actual location of the university intellectual as some combination of public figure, teacher and writer leaves one feeling that the critique of culture imagining itself as wholly and always politics projects an alternative that has no flesh on it at all.<sup>14</sup> The 'as such' thus registers as an abstraction, a theoretical opening that is never here filled. Once one begins to fill in the blanks, Mulhern's general dismissal of Cultural Studies (as such) seems to me troubling.

### *Classroom struggles*

The pages of a journal, a book or a newspaper are a workplace; so too is a classroom. Each impinges on and reproduces a set of finite social relations with unpredictable social outcomes. Lately much of the state-of-the-art reflection on this predicament has played up either a realism/pessimism (take your pick), loosely derived from Bourdieu, pointing out that all of these functions, especially those of the classroom, tend to the reproductive rather than the revolutionary. John Guillory's powerful case in *Cultural Capital* was that it is a misdirection of effort and merely a simulacrum of political action to spend time fighting over the content of the canon that is taught to students of literature. The major function of literary studies in the university is one of accreditation—sorting out the As from the Bs and Cs, the firsts from the upper and lower seconds—and of modelling a certain limited and limiting version of literacy in the domain of

<sup>12</sup> Mulhern, *Culture/Metaculture*, p. 170; 'Beyond Metaculture', p. 101–2.

<sup>13</sup> The *tute bianchi* and the women's movement are among the few he musters. 'Beyond Metaculture', p. 103

<sup>14</sup> Mulhern, *Culture/Metaculture*, p. 173.

writing.<sup>15</sup> To this end, it matters little whether students read Shakespeare or Toni Morrison (whose novel *Beloved* is currently one of the most commonly taught books in us universities); the point is rather to discriminate between the good, not-so-good and poor essays written about them. As 'high' culture and complex language, moreover, such texts are equally remote from the day-to-day exchanges of modern students. Because cultural capital is flowing (according to Guillory) from traditional literary readings to other sectors of the higher education system (most dramatically, to the pre-professional majors that lead directly to careers), one might surmise that Cultural Studies (when conceived as the study of popular culture) is proliferating as part of a mission to save something of the humanities from a tidal wave of indifference. The old clerisy, founded in and committed to traditional standards of literature-based literacy, is being replaced by a novel 'new class', whose lexicon derives from the keyboard and the demotic grammars of hitherto-unauthorized speech; a medium that Cultural Studies is often compelled to incorporate in its effort to appear current and cutting edge.

Guillory offered a stringent rebuke of naive identity-based pedagogy, a challenge to those who think that teaching a certain kind of literary content (e.g. novels about slavery) is either effective or sufficient to constitute politics as such. His book has had a big effect on humanities teachers, and been widely celebrated. One can see why. To those (like Francis Mulhern) who are exasperated by the claims made by some exponents of Cultural Studies, it has been a welcome setting of limits, a reminder that effective politics lies elsewhere. To others it has surely been a release from certain kinds of responsibility, freeing them from guilt at continuing to teach Shakespeare, Tennyson and other dead white males. But the inquiry into political affiliation and effect can be pursued in any item of culture, past or present; as Mulhern says, politics can be anywhere. As a principle of historical-analytic method, I would say that *all* culture leads to politics, and in two distinct ways. First, there is no item of exemplary expression (a.k.a. culture), whether Tennyson or Toni Morrison, that cannot be shown to have or have had some describable relation to a history of what we call, in shorthand, class conflict, and to a descriptive totalization (one of Mulhern's definitions of what political reason does).

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<sup>15</sup> John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*, Chicago and London 1993.

It may be that we are beyond the point where anyone can usefully theorize what culture *is*, as opposed to offering another history of what anthropologists, sociologists and literary critics have taken it to be. Culture now describes not only works of art, highbrow or popular, but the dynamics of all social exchange: working, eating, sleeping. Adorno saw this as cause for epistemological despair: 'in the open-air prison that the world is becoming, it is no longer so important to know what depends on what; such is the extent to which everything is one'. In these conditions, 'the question of the causal dependence of culture', he concluded, 'takes on a backwoods ring'.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps this despair, reincarnated as celebration, is one of the motives behind the overestimation of the adequacy of culture as politics that Mulhern attacks: if causes and effects can no longer be posited, then everything has to be embodied in the cultural object (as such), which becomes an expressive totality in itself. Nothing need then be said about mediation and there is no need for any re-examination of the base-superstructure problematic (still rarely explored in its original and often ambiguous forms, despite its centrality to the English debate); nor of the Althusserian case against the *coupe d'essence* which directly refutes any prospect of finding in a cultural object the reflective whole of its social-historical moment (past or present). Cultural items still require analytical specification in these terms.

Second, as a principle of pedagogic performance in the present, the location of teaching is itself always embedded in a site that can even more readily be made the object of totalization. Thus to teach a certain set of literary or other works to a specific group of students in a definite place and time (Oxbridge, community college, big state university, adult education group) is to participate in a clerisy and/or sector of the service economy whose structure is often perfectly transparent: tenured or untenured, full or part time, teaching 4 or 30 hours a week, having one or more jobs, unionized or not, supported by a range of staff positions, and so forth.<sup>17</sup> One of the most visible and fractious distinctions in the us higher educational system is the relation between teachers of 'literature' and teachers of writing ('composition'), about which a great deal has been and is being written. There is a debate about the content of education at stake here: how much should students write, about what, and under what conditions? But there is alongside this a competition for workplace

<sup>16</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, 'Cultural Criticism and Society', in Rolf Tiedemann, ed., *Can One Live After Auschwitz? A Philosophical Reader*, Stanford 2003, p. 161

<sup>17</sup> See for example Evan Watkins, *Work Time. English Departments and the Circulation of Cultural Value*, Stanford 1989.

recognition embedded in conditions of employment and reward. The politics of the second impinges upon the articulation of the first.

### *Culture's workers*

In other words, both at the level of the standard academic analysis of an artefact (book, film, song) as socially or historically embedded, and in the performance of that analysis for pay (with a certain style of delivery, as I've already noted), it is hard to deny that something of Mulhern's 'politics as such' is at work, presuming some adequate self-consciousness on the part of the teacher/writer (without which there is only ideology, as there is everywhere else). What is it then, in Mulhern's view, that has worked against this possibility in the teaching of and writing about Cultural Studies? How many of those self-identified as professing it assume that culture in the first sense (historical-analytic) is the *whole* of politics, everything that matters, as opposed to being always traceable to a political moment in the past, and/or deployed in certain directions in the present? Mulhern reasonably wants to dissuade us from taking at face value the arguments of an Arnold or a Leavis, and the implicit assumptions of even the best of our sort—Williams and Hall—about the politically formative force of culture as such: a version of what has been called culturalism.

These were historically located arguments, expressions of a fear of economism as well as of the threat to humanities education posed by the new technologies, and can be explained as such without being justified or fetishized. They can also be understood as responsive to the general demise of what Perry Anderson described as a western Marxism prone to overestimating the cultural sector as either a last revolutionary medium (the purity or exemplarity of the aesthetic) or an articulate index of political failure.<sup>18</sup> But do these foundational texts still function, apart from their place and time, as the core of a comprehensive methodology for Cultural Studies? Stuart Hall himself offered a history of the Birmingham School as an institution fully caught up in the stresses of feminism and race, even to the point of its own dissolution; one which ends with the claim that 'there is all the difference in the world between understanding the politics of intellectual work and substituting intellectual work for politics'.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Considerations on Western Marxism*, London 1976.

<sup>19</sup> Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies', in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler, eds, *Cultural Studies*, London 1992, p. 286.

Mulhern allows that his model of the discipline is a 'British case' and that the Birmingham paradigm has been replaced by a 'fractious international network conventionally resistant to all claims of origin, especially when they concern an old colonial heartland'.<sup>20</sup> But what is the force of 'fractious' if the origin was already so, and how convincing is the origin itself? *Metaculture* seems to suggest a covert coherence to the Cultural Studies enterprise that is actively disavowed by its practitioners, who have always resisted any limits on what they do and how they do it, in the cause of understanding 'a whole way of life' whose analysis cannot permit methodological constraints or prior 'guarantees'.<sup>21</sup> In this way they are merely the limit case of a methodological eclecticism that affects (some might say afflicts) all the humanities and social sciences: the displacement of politics would then be a generic tendency in university culture, not a limited instance governing Cultural Studies. Is there really a core of Kulturkritik at work throughout this messy assemblage of objects and attitudes?

At the very least, if we are to account for the current profile of Cultural Studies there are a lot of names and places left out of Mulhern's diagnosis (start with Spivak, Said, Žižek, Butler, Bakhtin, Ahmad, Baudrillard) or merely mentioned without discussion (Bhabha, Bourdieu, Eagleton, Jameson, Lyotard). Strikingly undiscussed are above all the gurus of post-68: Derrida, Barthes, Foucault, Lacan, without whom Cultural Studies (as such?) in much of the world is simply unimaginable. What of feminism? Cixous, Irigaray, Wittig, Haraway? Surely it is not only literary versions of Cultural Studies that foreground these and other figures as essential reading? Going back to exemplary origins, and picking up Stallybrass and White's widely influential *The Politics and Poetry of Transgression*, a prototype for one kind of cultural study, we read an opening declaration of the influence of four bodies of work, only one of them (Mary Douglas's) originally in English: the others are Bakhtin, Elias and Bourdieu.<sup>22</sup> Or take Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979), with its acknowledgment of the formative power of Barthes's *Mythologies*. I wonder whether this model of a movement founded in Williams and Hall and only peripherally influenced by others ever really existed. Mulhern would respond that his aim is to pinpoint a tendency,

<sup>20</sup> *Culture/Metaculture*, pp. xviii, 133.

<sup>21</sup> Grossberg, Nelson and Treichler, *Cultural Studies*, pp. 2–3, 14.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetry of Transgression*, Ithaca, NY 1986, p. ix.

a discursive form within Cultural Studies, rather than provide an aerial view. Nevertheless, it is worth asking whether this reconstruction, albeit in the interests of a merely formal articulation, may be a reification. One can sympathize with the critique of the easy rush to assumptions of political effect while wondering whether Mulhern might not be offering a reduced and partial model of what is a much more diverse history—one that arguably includes, in its knowledge of '1968' as well as in the contemporary academic workplace, various versions of politics as such. A specific history of the Birmingham School would be one thing, but that is not what Mulhern seems to be proposing. Such a history would surely have to admit that the imperative, after 68, behind what would become departmentalized as Cultural Studies, was a democratic and demographic one: an insistence that the forms of unofficial 'culture' were worth attention as symptomatic of political-historical relations. This may have come with a residual taint of Kulturkritik in its occasional claims for the *quality* of the common culture, but that was not the main point.

### *Locating Kulturkritik*

Mulhern's follow-up essay 'Beyond Metaculture' does go some way toward modifying the implicit anglocentrism of *Culture/Metaculture*'s account of the study of culture, offering a reckoning with Adorno and Marcuse. But they too are found wanting, unwittingly interpellated by the ghosts of Kulturkritik. Mulhern is of course no xenophobe or defender of an anglophone supremacy, but an unintended consequence of his staging of the Hoggart–Williams–Hall triad as exemplary is the bypassing of alternative inputs as something more than just additives. To say that Barthes and Derrida and Althusser and others were there from the first is to offer a different construction of the core method itself, and to render it perhaps a method already dispersed and certainly not completely in the spirit of Kulturkritik.

There's that word again. It is one of Mulhern's organizing concepts, and one under which almost all of Cultural Studies is deemed to reside. It begins, as readers will know by now, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a melancholy 'single discursive formation' imagining culture as the sole (and lost) social authority now swallowed by modernization and the masses.<sup>23</sup> Latter-day assertions of the primacy of popular

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<sup>23</sup> *Culture/Metaculture*, p. 19.

culture, originally despised by Kulturkritik, unwittingly inherit its idea of culture as the 'sovereign social authority' and thus its 'deep form': hence the subsumption and displacement of politics as such.<sup>24</sup>

First, I want to register the positioning of this term, even without the italics denoting foreignness (a decision Mulhern explains in the book's first few pages), as still residually strange, and always foreign. Can the specification of Kulturkritik as the fatal flaw in Cultural Studies ever cease to suggest an invocation of *Kulturkritik* and therefore of a particularly German infection? *Caesar non est supra grammaticum*. If I were to propose that Mulhern's 'politics as such' were to be nominated 'politics an und fur sich', without italics or umlaut, how would I not be marking him as a Hegelian, however carefully I argued for the naturalization of the term as describing a grand discursive narrative of European thought, or as called forth by the lack of an adequate English term for what I mean? We are back to style, and to the styling of the foreign. The incubus sitting upon the body of Cultural Studies emanates from Germany and, more pointedly, its affiliation remains German: what inhibits politics as such is German ideology. 1968 et al. never had a chance. Could this stylistic tic, this urge toward the making foreign of the essential corrupting agency, perhaps be read (against Mulhern's declared intentions and his record as a solid internationalist) as another echo of Edmund Burke's suspicion of the foreign? (In his case French theory and German Illuminati?) Mulhern might respond by saying that it is merely a formal category appearing everywhere and not blamed on anyone.<sup>25</sup> But if we do not have in English an adequate term for this, because the literal translation means something else (as he claims), then are we not indeed in the business of attributing it to the foreign, and not simply as descriptor but as origin?

### *A parochial tradition?*

Which brings me to the 'what is to be done' section of my argument. Many of those held to account by Mulhern for their unashamed embrace of the despised Kulturkritik—and I am not denying that they did embrace something of it—were also explicit advocates of a knowledge of the foreign. T. S. Eliot was an aggressive cosmopolitan committed to the

<sup>24</sup> *Culture/Metaculture*, pp. 22, xix.

<sup>25</sup> And the editors of this journal, whose careful and considered responses have been a great help to me, would agree with him.

parity of the major European and classical languages and literatures with English. Leavis (on whom Mulhern has done brilliant work) was, for all his provincialisms, prepared to argue for both Dante and French literature as having an important place in an English literature curriculum. True, there is no democratic instinct at work in either of these cases. Leavis for instance turns to Dante for a 'standing place' outside the 'modern scene', and his taste for French is not unmarked by a conventional class identification with the language of polite exchange and diplomacy even if it is supported by its obvious relevance to Modernist poetry.<sup>26</sup> Behind both there is indeed Matthew Arnold, conventionally disparaged for his snooty worship of 'the best that is known and thought in the world' but less often remembered for his conviction that much of the best that has been known and thought was not known or thought in English.<sup>27</sup> For all of the elitisms enshrined in each of these educational polemicists they preserved what we must recognize as the *form* of the foreign, and a substantial element of its content, as something to be desired and disseminated. They did not speak for Edmund Burke's England. As we exhume them for their various limitations—and most histories of the discipline of English studies do this regularly, as Mulhern does too—we should not gloss over the parts of their agendas that reflect on our own generational failures.

There may then be a coherence to the silence or oversight holding together Mulhern's invocation of the negative functions of Kulturkritik, the partial reading of its deceased anglophone exponents (Arnold, Eliot, Leavis), and the complete or relative ignoring of French and other theory (and its historical occasions) in his genesis of a normative Cultural Studies discipline by way of three male writers: Hoggart, Hall and Williams. These writers are produced as much or more for what they lack as for what they offer, in order to create a space for a 'cultural politics' yet to come, or yet to be specified as other than formal; and always to be founded in the discrepancy between culture and politics.<sup>28</sup> My own sense of the discrepancy would include that between anglophone and other societies, and the pedagogical aporia represented by translation (always to be attempted, never to be completed, and above all always to be made self-conscious in its failures and limits). Cultural Studies,

<sup>26</sup> F. R. Leavis, *Education and the University: A Sketch for an English School*, new edition, London 1948, p. 62–3.

<sup>27</sup> Matthew Arnold, 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time', in *Essays in Criticism: Second Series*, London 1869, p. 36.

<sup>28</sup> *Culture/Metaculture*, p. 171.

it is true, has for most of its career focused on the exhibits of its own homelands. That is one way in which it has not followed the direction of the Kulturkritikers, whose internationalism should not be replicated as it was, but whose formal drive toward the exogamous should be honoured and adapted to the present. The opaque areas of the world are not just sentimentalized repositories of resistance to International Business English and the anglophone world novel: one of their names, for example, is Arabic.

The resistance of Cultural Studies to the foreign (as that which almost by definition it cannot study) is far more worrying than any residual investment in a preference for *Kultur* over mass culture and for both over politics. The methodological preference of Cultural Studies will almost always be for some narrowly national archive, since the thick description that it pursues almost demands that we stick to what we think we know best. And if it is indeed true, as it seems to be, that the institutionalizing of Cultural Studies is a specifically anglophone event, then it will not remain free from suspicion as performing a marketing effort for the new global order even in its critical attentions to the lineaments of a popular Anglo (but mostly American) lifestyle already deeply implicated in commodity fetishisms at every level. At the same time, there has not for some time been (if there ever was) a traditionally 'national' culture in any of the sites where the disciplinary formation (hardly a discipline) exists, so that ethnicity, globality, hybridity (cult words, but they lead to and overlie, for example, the conditions of the transnational movement of labour) have already registered as among its required terms of analysis. To resist the omission of the foreign as part of the national culture, within or beyond its borders, might well be, these days, a form of politics as such, and it can surely lead or be directed to such politics. Who sews our footballs?

SVEN LÜTTICKEN

## AFTER THE GODS

**F**OR CENTURIES, classical mythology functioned as an intermediate medium that connected the different arts and anchored them in society.<sup>1</sup> It forged a link between visual art and literature, with the interpretations of humanist scholars often supplying subjects for poets, painters and sculptors alike. This tradition was founded above all on the supreme literary and artistic value attached to ancient culture; while it was clear that the literal subjects were heathen gods and un-Christian heroes, their exploits were allegorized so that a mythological rape scene could suggest an array of profound meanings and become a suitable subject for literature and art.

By the eighteenth century, however, mythology's traditional cultural position came under pressure as debate raged on the origin and meaning of myths. De-allegorizing the Greek gods, eighteenth-century *philosophes* found them no less barbaric than the myths of contemporary 'savages': both were instances of a 'primitive mentality' in which man expresses himself not through abstract reasoning, but through images. A fundamental difference between such modes of thought and modern, rational culture was proclaimed, laying the basis for contemporary conceptions of myth. As more distant and 'primitive' civilizations became better known, Christian apologists and comparative mythologists battled over such questions as whether a universal 'primitive monotheism'—later distorted by polytheist mythologies (except in Judaism)—had been common to all civilizations; and whether all myths were corruptions of the Bible. Biblical stories—the Flood, for instance—were increasingly recognized as local iterations of more widely diffused myths, and the origins of Christianity as lying in mythology rather than in revelation.

The new accounts of myth and religion robbed Renaissance interpretations of both Christian and Graeco-Roman subjects of their pretended

timelessness and universality, and precipitated an 'iconographic crisis'.<sup>2</sup> This disintegration of the Renaissance tradition went hand in hand with the rise of Idealist and Romantic aesthetics, or what Jacques Rancière has termed the 'aesthetic regime', which approaches works of art as *choses de pensée*, objects of thought. In Schelling's words, art is *werkstättige Wissenschaft*, practical science, rather than a representation of a mythological or historical subject that follows certain established laws. But works of art were not to be assimilated to discursive thought; they bear witness to a different sort of apprehension, 'a form of thought which is immanent in its other and inhabited by its other'.<sup>3</sup> Art became a form of thought that is intimately tied to non-thought, to a mimetic residue resistant to reason. Myth was one name for this dark side of art—its non-identical side, heteronomous and not containable within the neatly defined limits of art. Yet 'myth', in naming this side, also identifies it and integrates it into discourse. But this process is never complete, and Romantic and modern art often worked against it, exacerbating rather than reducing the mystery. The conventional use of old mythologies risked making them little more than a bureaucratically managed set of subjects with certain allotted meanings. Increasingly, the use of non-Western, 'primitive' myths was to prove alluring, as was the tempting, if elusive prospect of creating new Romantic mythologies.

Schelling succinctly stated what was, in the years around 1800, a shared opinion among Romantics and Idealist thinkers: 'Mythology is the necessary precondition and the primary subject of all art'.<sup>4</sup> Religious in origin, mythology basically existed in order to become poetic, to become artistic. The desire to reintegrate art into an organic community led to different versions of the visionary concept of a 'new mythology', but none of these could offer thinkers or artists a ready-made set of mythological

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Stewart Martin for his comments on an earlier draft of this article, any errors or inconsistencies are of course my own.

<sup>2</sup> The classic study of 18th century mythology is Frank Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods*, Cambridge, MA 1959. The term 'iconographical crisis' was coined by Werner Busch, *Das sentimentalische Bild: Die Krise der Kunst im 18. Jahrhundert und die Geburt der Moderne*, Munich 1993.

<sup>3</sup> Jacques Rancière, *L'Inconscient esthétique*, Paris 2001, pp. 12, 50. Schelling's phrase is from his lecture 'Über das Verhältnis der bildenden Künste zu der Natur' (1807), in K. F. A. Schelling, ed., *Sammtliche Werke*, vol. 7, Stuttgart and Augsburg 1859, p. 299.

<sup>4</sup> F. W. J. Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst* (1802–03), in *Sammtliche Werke* (ed. K. F. A. Schelling), vol. 5, Stuttgart and Augsburg 1859, p. 405.

motifs with which they could work. By contrast, Goethe and Johann Heinrich Meyer tried to supply visual artists with a new approach to classical mythology, which would as it were preserve the iconographical tradition in a different guise. Both tendencies wanted to establish an art that would be valid in a time when the old iconography and formal conventions had been eroded through the decoding and deterritorialization of the previous economic and social order; both tried to find a way of negotiating modern art's broken ties with its traditional social, cultural and political moorings. Both did so by according important but very different roles to mythology. Goethe and Meyer effectively tried to 'tame' heteronomous myth by making strict rules for which subjects were suitable—a move not dissimilar to the conventionalization of mythology in the Renaissance tradition, though Goethe and Meyer now tried to deduce criteria for proper use from visual art's specific characteristics. As a result, myth was made a servant of art's inherent logic, its difference reduced. By contrast, Schelling and others who demanded a new mythology tried to use myth to transcend art's limitations and to change modern culture and society as a whole.

### *'Mythology must become philosophical'*

In various texts from the 1760s to the 1790s, Herder meditated on the dubious use value of ancient mythologies—the products of vastly different societies—to modern (German) writers, and asked under what circumstances old myths might be renewed or a new mythology created.<sup>5</sup> His hesitant tone is in marked contrast to that of the so-called '*Ältestes Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus*', a brief and incomplete but ambitious—not to say brash—programme for a post-Kantian Idealist philosophy, and for a rational and harmonious society. It was most likely written in 1797, though published only in 1917 by Franz Rosenzweig. Although it is in Hegel's handwriting, Rosenzweig asserted that the nature of the text strongly suggests Hegel's onetime co-student Schelling as the actual author, an idea that has been contested in recent decades.<sup>6</sup> In what seems almost like a deliberately ironic echo of the 'authorless', collective origin of myth, the origin of the

<sup>5</sup> Manfred Frank, *Der kommende Gott. Vorlesungen über die neue Mythologie*, Frankfurt am Main 1982, pp. 125–52.

<sup>6</sup> See the introduction in Christoph Jamme and Helmuth Schneider, eds, *Mythologie der Vernunft. Hegels 'ältestes Systemprogramm' des deutschen Idealismus*, Frankfurt am Main 1984, pp. 21–76.

new concept of mythology itself cannot be ascribed to a single author with complete certainty.

According to the *Systemprogramm*, the highest idea on which art and society must be founded is the—Platonic—ideal of beauty, which can unite the fragmented post-Kantian world: beauty is truth, it is morally good. The poetry of the future should be ‘polytheistic’, swarming with colourful deities: ‘Thus poetry gains a higher dignity, and it ends up becoming what it was in the beginning: teacher of mankind.’ The author is thus led to the notion of a new mythology, which he claims has never before occurred to anyone (all the more ironic, then, that we do not really know who is speaking). This new mythology must be in the service of reason. By fusing philosophy with art, ideas with the world of the senses, it will not only heal the Kantian rift between freedom and nature, between the ideal and the real; it will also reconcile the free-floating modern intelligentsia with ‘the people’ and so create universal harmony.

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Until we aestheticize, that is, mythologize ideas they will not interest the people, and conversely: until mythology has become reasonable, it will embarrass the philosopher. Therefore, the enlightened and the unenlightened must finally shake hands, mythology must become philosophical, the people reasonable, and philosophy must become mythological in order to make the philosophers sensuous. Then eternal unity shall prevail among us.<sup>7</sup>

The new mythology will be a new religion, but one conceived in aesthetic, poetic terms. In its bid to erase the dividing lines between religion, philosophy and art, it strives to recreate a prelapsarian state in which such distinctions are mere differences in emphasis.

In this sense, the *topos* of the new mythology is a version of the Romantic dream of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*—the total work of art that not only binds the individual arts into a coherent whole (as the medieval cathedral was supposed to have done) but also unites art once more with ‘the people’, conceived as an organic entity. While the term *Gesamtkunstwerk* would be coined by Wagner in the mid-nineteenth century, his view of the *Musikdrama* as total work of art is an elaborate variation on a tendency already discernible in the less crystallized, shape-shifting aesthetic debates of the years around 1800. Philipp Otto Runge dreamt of an architectural setting for his *Zeiten* paintings that would be ‘an abstract painterly,

<sup>7</sup> ‘Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus’ (1797) in F. W. J. Schelling, *Texte zur Philosophie der Kunst*, Stuttgart 1982, p. 98.

fantastic musical poem with choruses, a composition for all three arts together'; Friedrich Schlegel's conception of Romantic poetry as *progressive Universalpoesie* can also be seen in this context, as Romantic poetry was to unify all genres of poetry, indeed all genres of literature and criticism, and thus transcend its traditional limits.<sup>8</sup> This could be described as the progressive *Gesamtkunstwerk* of early German Romanticism: its universality was to be one of change, of open-ended development, not the hierarchical and fundamentally static dream of totality that already manifests itself in Runge's fantasy. Like Schlegel's early fragments, the idealist *Systemprogramm* universalizes poetry and equates it with art as such; yet the *Systemprogramm* also, via its mythological conception of poetry (or poetical conception of mythology), already seeks to impose 'eternal unity'.

With the *Systemprogramm* remaining unpublished for more than a century, the project for the new mythology was first made public in 1800 by Schelling and Friedrich Schlegel. At that time, when he was close to Schlegel's Romantic circle, Schelling was guided by the conviction that art was the highest sphere of human activity—higher than philosophy, or at least equal to it. Of all the arts, poetry was of paramount importance, since it would serve as the location for the construction of the new mythology, which would have repercussions for all the others. Schelling longed for a modern Homer, and such a poet needs gods: 'What ideas are for philosophy gods are for art, and vice versa.'<sup>9</sup> In art, the real embodies the ideal, and these embodied ideas are gods—hence Schelling's notion that mythology is 'the necessary precondition and the primary subject of all art.' In later works such as the *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, Schelling would develop a religious philosophy of myth, but his early thought on the subject focuses on its artistic, poetic, imaginative aspects. His new mythology is nothing less than the proposed poeticization or 'romanticization' of the world, to put it in Novalis's terms. The whole world is to become a total work of art, with everything flowing back into the 'ocean of poetry', in which intellectuals can swim just as happily as simple people, thus re-enchanting the world and creating a true collective mythology. Myth, which penetrates art from a realm beyond the borders

<sup>8</sup> Philipp Otto Runge quoted in Gunther Metken, 'Die Wiedergeburt des Musikdramas aus dem Geiste der Kunstgeschichte. Richard Wagner und die Künste', in Harald Szeemann, ed., *Der Hang zum Gesamtkunstwerk*, Berlin 1983, p. 76; Friedrich Schlegel, 'Athenäums'-Fragmente (1798), in *Kritische und theoretische Schriften*, Stuttgart 1978, pp. 90–1.

<sup>9</sup> Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, p. 391.

of its autonomy, is thus used to explode art's autonomous condition, to let it transcend its limitations and become universal.

### *New world born from chaos*

According to the Schelling of 1800–04, Christianity possessed no real mythology comparable to that of the ancients. In Greek mythology, gods were symbolic embodiments of ideas, and hence of the absolute; Christ, the 'last God', is not a symbolic figure in this sense, as he is a concrete, specific human individual who also happens to be divine. Great Christian poets such as Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes and Goethe were thus forced to create their own equivalents of the Greek pantheon.<sup>10</sup> Romantic enthusiasm for a poetic *Gesamtkunstwerk* uniting art and the people was dimmed somewhat by the realization that a truly collective mythology could not be created at will. It lay beyond the reach of modern poets or painters, who could not transcend art's autonomy *from their autonomous position*; aesthetic mythology could not become truly mythological, that is universal, as long as it was aesthetic.

In the 'System des transzendentalen Idealismus' (1800) Schelling had already raised doubts as to whether such a mythology could be created: 'But how a new mythology, which cannot be the invention of a single poet but only of a new race [*Geschlecht*] which as it were acts as One Poet, can come about, this is a problem which can only be solved by the future vicissitudes of the world and the further course of history.'<sup>11</sup> He made a similar point in the *Philosophie der Kunst*—now also referring to the new speculative physics and Romantic-Idealist *Naturphilosophie* as possible sources. But Schelling held out little hope for the rapid creation of unifying myths which, in the modern Christian worldview, had to be historically situated, as miracles. From the material offered by history, poets must create their own mythologies, as Dante or Shakespeare had done:

So until history gives us once more a general mythology, the individual will have to create its own mythological circle; and as the general element of modernity is originality, the law will apply that the more original something is, the more universal it will be (although one has to distinguish originality and particularity).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, pp. 431–3, 444–9

<sup>11</sup> Schelling, 'System des transzendentalen Idealismus' (1800), in Schelling, ed., *Sammtliche Werke*, vol 3, p. 629.

<sup>12</sup> Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, p. 447.

These remarks are unthinkable without the work of the Schlegel brothers. Friedrich Schlegel in particular—although he would later become a reactionary Catholic who tried to turn medieval culture into a rigid aesthetic model—initially embraced modern originality just as wholeheartedly as Schelling. Indeed, in the ‘Gespräch über die Poesie’ (1800), he developed the notion of a new mythology with even greater Romantic fervour than the latter. The text is a dialogue in which one character, Ludoviko, gives an ‘Address on Mythology’. ‘I claim that our poetry is lacking a centre such as the mythology of the ancients. Everything substantial in which modern poetry falls behind the literature of antiquity can be summarized as follows: we have no mythology.’ Ludoviko grandly declares Idealism and speculative physics to be the roads to the new mythology—a reminder of Schlegel’s association with Schelling in those days. But here, the emphasis is different. Schlegel presents mythology as a joyful chaos of gods, forever in transformative flux, *Anbilden und Umbilden*; Schlegel, or Ludoviko, claims that Romantic poetry with its contradictions and ironies is already an ‘indirect mythology’.<sup>13</sup> The role of originality and individuality is affirmed; there are many paths to the new mythology. Yet however brilliantly turbulent this is imagined to be, it can still be described as a *Gesamtkunstwerk* in that it will re-enchant the world and thus unite people in an organic *Gemeinschaft*.

What matters here is not so much authors ‘influencing’ each other as a constellation of texts that propose, with different inflections, the project of a new mythology, of a mythological *Gesamtkunstwerk*, of a religious-philosophical-artistic unity healing the rifts that run through contemporary society and the modern subject. Schelling emphasized the unitary character that a truly new mythology would have to possess, and grew increasingly sceptical of whether it could possibly be realized. He abandoned the project completely in his later writings, where he interpreted myth religiously rather than poetically, and presented ancient mythology as a theogonic process culminating in Christianity. Friedrich Schlegel sketches a potentially non-authoritarian *Gesamtkunstwerk*, but sees the apparent chaos of true mythology as the highest form of order, in which all literary works link together in an organic fashion to form a single body. In a sense, Schlegel here prepared the ground for his later attempt to impose ‘organic’ wholeness on society and culture along

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<sup>13</sup> Friedrich Schlegel, ‘Gespräch über die Poesie’ (1800), in *Kritische und theoretische Schriften*, Stuttgart 1978, p. 190–5.

Catholic lines. For if order does not automatically, spontaneously spring from disorder, it has to be imposed forcibly.

### *Goethe's symbolic gods*

A generation earlier, Johann Joachim Winckelmann's writings on art history had tended to relegate the gods to the sphere of formal beauty. While radical comparative mythologists compared Greeks to South Sea islanders—both seen as superstitious barbarians—Winckelmann idealized classical Greece as a time and place when political and environmental conditions combined to bring forth an ideal beauty, both in the flesh and in art. Winckelmann considered Homer to be the basis of Greek artistic production. Homer's writing was highly visual and plastic, as compared to the work of a modern 'northern' poet such as Milton. In part because of Homer's influence, and as distinct from the disjunction of form and meaning in much art before and since, Greek visual art dealt with lofty ideals in perfectly suitable, sensuous forms. Homeric myth helped Greek art to acquire its highly specific character. *Contra* those who saw Greek myths as mere derivations from older Egyptian sources, Winckelmann found Egyptian art static and obsessed with death, compared to the life-affirming art of classical Greece.<sup>14</sup> Had he wished to state his position vis-à-vis radical comparative mythologists, Winckelmann might have insisted that the vitality of Hellenistic art proved that, whatever the sources of their mythology, the Greeks had transcended them to create a free kind of beauty that humanizes the crude origins of their mythical world. The gods became beautiful forms rather than allegorical representations.

Johann Heinrich Meyer and Goethe sealed this 'formalization' of the gods in a text whose authorship is only slightly less ambiguous than that of the *Systemprogramm*: 'Über die Gegenstände der bildenden Kunst', published anonymously in the *Propyläen* in 1798. Though written by Meyer, this essay came out of discussions with Goethe and a short text written by the latter in the previous year. When it appeared, it was widely

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<sup>14</sup> Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (1764), Wien 1934, pp. 44–8. See also Winckelmann, 'Erläuterung der Gedanken von der Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst' (1756), in *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst*, Stuttgart 1969, pp. 101–3. Winckelmann tries to distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' allegory in visual art; several decades later, the dichotomy between symbol and allegory was adopted by Goethe and Schelling for this purpose.

understood to represent the views of the journal's publisher, Goethe.<sup>15</sup> Meyer and Goethe distinguished allegory—which had to be handled with extreme care, and preferably not at all—from the symbol. The latter worked through the senses, through aesthetic contemplation, whereas allegory was a matter of understanding, a cerebral affair. The text also insists on the pre-eminent status of deities in art:

In the symbolic figures of the gods or their characteristics visual art finds its highest subjects, even commanding ideas and concepts to appear in sensuous forms, forcing them to step into space, take on form and become visible to the eye. We would scarcely believe such miracles to be possible, if the ancients had not actually achieved them in their works. The great cycle of the twelve major gods, and the smaller ones of the Muses, the Graces, Horae, Parcae and others all interconnect, like the gears of a clockwork, to form a complete whole.<sup>16</sup>

This is as it were a Neoplatonic version of Winckelmann's neoclassicism: the beautiful forms of the gods incarnate ideas and concepts, rather than attempting to illustrate them in allegorical fashion. Symbols are not necessarily mythological subjects, of course, and many mythological subjects are arcane and allegorical rather than symbolic; but when Goethe began his series of contests for German artists he almost always turned to Homeric subjects, in 1799 praising Winckelmann for having led Greek works of art back to their *mythologischen Grund* by pointing out the centrality of Homer.<sup>17</sup>

Ancient art was considered to be vastly superior to modern art mainly because the Greek mythology on which it was based had provided a fixed set of beautiful symbolic forms:

although style changed, forms remained always the same; there were better and poorer images, but they were all made according to the same rule. By contrast, the moderns appear to be so much in love with the new that this prevents them from reproducing already existing types and characters.

<sup>15</sup> Ernst Osterkamp, 'Aus dem Gesichtspunkt reiner Menschlichkeit. Goethes Preisaufgaben für bildende Künstler 1799–1805', in Sabine Schulze, ed., *Goethe und die Kunst*, Stuttgart 1994, pp. 312–3.

<sup>16</sup> Johann Heinrich Meyer and Johann Wolfgang Goethe, 'Über die Gegenstände der bildenden Kunst' (1798), in Meyer, *Kleine Schriften zur Kunst*, Heilbronn 1886, p. 20.

<sup>17</sup> Osterkamp, 'Gesichtspunkt', pp. 314–5.

'Modern' artists, that is, artists after antiquity, destroyed the persistence of forms because they did not want to be accused of imitating others; 'Therefore we recognize Saint Peter not because of his form [*Gestalt*], but because of the keys, just as we recognize Paul by his sword.' In other words: whereas Apollo was a transparent symbolic form, any old bearded fellow could be Saint Peter, identifiable only by his conventional allegorical attributes. After this it comes as no surprise that Meyer and Goethe paint a rather dismal picture of 'modern' Christian art:

One often hears complaints that our myths do not provide artists with the advantages the ancients could draw from theirs. On the whole, this is undoubtedly true, but we did not even use what was offered by our myths. The apostles would have made for a beautiful cycle, as would the evangelists, prophets and sibyls. Now there is no time left to make up for what we neglected to do, and we must be content to realize the damage that was done.<sup>18</sup>

The symbol theory shares with the Romantic and Idealist approaches of Schlegel and Schelling the tendency to naturalize by dint of organic metaphors: while the symbol embodies ideas in a 'transparent' way, the new mythology will reunite the various branches of culture and society and re-enchant the world into a place of wholeness and wonder. The modern notion of the symbol would soon be integrated into Romantic and Idealist conceptions of art and culture but at this point, the terms were being systematically opposed for the first time. In the years following the publication of Goethe and Meyer's essay, the Schlegels, Novalis and other early Romantics embraced allegory as a peculiarly modern and Christian device, pointing towards an unrepresentable absolute by means of imperfect signs. Schelling, whose classicist tendencies became more pronounced as the years progressed, shared Goethe's preference for the symbol and for Homeric myth. According to Schelling, in allegory the concrete merely *signifies* the absolute, whereas mythic symbols *embody* the absolute (although these myths can also be allegorized post facto); the concrete and the absolute are one.<sup>19</sup>

Schelling's theory of the gods as symbols challenges Goethe's in that it focuses not on the work of art as an end in itself—which it usually seemed to be with Goethe—but on the whole of society and culture. It is intended to be transformative, rather than to justify a specific art practice, using a new mythology to break out of art's autonomous zone. But

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<sup>18</sup> Meyer and Goethe, 'Gegenstände', pp. 22–4.

<sup>19</sup> Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, pp. 451–5.

the world itself would then be poeticized, aestheticized; it would become one great social-artistic symbol.

This is clearly not the intention of Goethe and Meyer, who seek to define limits rather than transcend them. Taking their cues from Lessing and Winckelmann, they developed what could be termed a Laocoönist mythology for visual art. In his *Laokoon oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie* (1766), Lessing had sought to demarcate what is proper to visual art and what to poetry, while Goethe was concerned that artists should choose subjects that did not depend on one's knowledge of literature; the viewer should be able to intuit a composition's meaning symbolically.<sup>20</sup> Of course, this brand of Laocoönism differs from later versions such as Greenberg's; unlike Goethe or Lessing, Greenberg did not tolerate myth or other 'literary' or 'narrative' forms in painting. Early Laocoönism wanted to ground painting 'more securely in its area of competence' just as Greenberg would later aim to do, but it did not aim to expunge *all* literary elements. Greek myth was deemed suitable for painting and sculpture because of its plastic qualities; its gods were turned into aesthetic symbols and the allegorical contraptions of the classical regime abandoned.

Whereas calls for using poetry to create a new mythology universalized one art—literature—and ascribed to it the potential to change the whole of culture, this alternative approach to myth was more interested in keeping the integrity of disciplines intact. Although the symbolic myth of Homer would ensure the coherence of culture and prevent its disintegration into autistic, 'pure' practices, Goethe and Meyer nonetheless envisaged an art of specialist domains ruled by medium-specific criteria—an art which Wagner, the great late-Romantic anti-Laocoönist, would call *künstliche Kunst*, artificial art, as opposed to the true, integrated creation of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.<sup>21</sup> It was to be an art administered by benevolent dictators, not one ruled by the amorphous collective that would be the basis of the new mythology.

<sup>20</sup> Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, 'Laokoon oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie', in *Lessing, Werke*, vol. 2, Leipzig 1956, pp. 138–254. Examples of militant twentieth-century Laocoönism are Clement Greenberg, 'Towards a Newer Laocoön', in *The Collected Essays and Criticism 1. Perceptions and Judgments*, 1939–1944, Chicago and London 1986, pp. 23–38; and Rudolf Arnheim, 'A New Laocoön Artistic Composites and the Talking Film', in Arnheim, *Film as Art*, Berkeley 1957, pp. 199–230.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Wagner, *Oper und Drama* [1851], Berlin n. d., pp. 101–2.

In the rather spectacularly unsuccessful *Weimarer Preisaufgaben*—artistic contests organized by Goethe around 1800—artists had to submit drawings illustrating a specified Homeric subject, such as Venus leading Helen to Paris. The stylistic preference was for line-drawings of the sober neoclassical variety, which had been pioneered by John Flaxman (about whose work Goethe was not too enthusiastic). Goethe hoped that in this way mythology could still fulfil the ‘binding’ function it had in Renaissance and Baroque art, with new rules—but rules nonetheless—and thus with experts and princes creating guidelines rather than abandoning culture to an uncertain future of mythmaking. He strove to develop an artistic mythology that could legitimately be part of visual art but would still maintain a link with literature through Homer. The symbolic, which is capable of bridging the gap between the visual and the written, can take on myth’s role in holding culture together—a role which is exacerbated when the symbol is integrated into the new mythology theories. Thus Laocoönist and *Gesamtkunstwerk* approaches to mythology in German Romanticism and Idealism share a common ground. Both try to impose some kind of unity on a culture that has broken with the post-Renaissance consensus, reshuffling the arts, redefining, limiting or expanding them in various and often contradictory ways.

### *Faust's inventions*

A third aesthetic approach to myth in the years around 1800, centred on the notion of original or individual mythology, offers the possibility of leaving this common ground. As we have seen, Schelling found such individual mythologies in the works of Dante, Shakespeare and Goethe. Since the modern, post-classical world is in constant motion and lacks a definitive mythology, authors must make do with whatever fragments their time offers them, and construct a personal system of myth which, through its internal coherence and sense of necessity, could have something of the power of a true, collective myth world. *Faust*, on which Goethe worked through most of his career, was for Schelling one of the supreme examples of such a personal, partial, historical mythology.<sup>22</sup> Goethe was not always a neoclassical doctrinaire who wanted to force his aesthetic programme on artists. The concept and part of the execution of *Faust* Part One went back to Goethe’s proto-Romantic *Sturm und Drang* days, when he had not yet espoused classical virtue. Part Two was written when Goethe had become the *Klassiker* residing in Weimar, but long after the

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<sup>22</sup> Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, p. 446.

failure of his militantly classicist programme for art and his battle with Romanticism, at a time when he was exploring the difference between the classical and the 'Romantic' modern world in a more reflexive manner.

With Meyer, Goethe lamented that each modern (that is, post-classical) painter had his own form for the Madonna. In *Faust*, Goethe was to give centre stage to a Christian mythological figure whose very essence is shape-shifting: Mephistopheles, emissary of Satan, who first approaches Faust in the form of a black poodle and repeatedly diverts his quest for knowledge and power with adventures entailing some form of disguise. *Faust 2* is an extravagant montage of allegorical tableaux, starting with Faust and Mephistopheles devising an elaborate supernatural masque at the palace of the German emperor. All kinds of fantastic and mythological characters appear, conjured up by Mephisto's magic, from Pluto to Pan. After the masque, the emperor wants to see Helen and Paris, the ideal man and woman of classical myth, in '*deutlichen Gestalten*'. Mephisto declares that he, as a modern northern devil, does not know how to summon them; Faust himself must descend to the realm of the Ancient Mothers—an invention of Goethe's, they are the rulers of a world of spirits, insubstantial images of the dead. They give Faust burning incense, and from the smoke he bodies forth the ideal, symbolic forms of the Greek heroes. When Faust, transfixed, tries to touch Helen while parading her and Paris before the emperor and his court, her ideal shape quickly grows hazy and an explosion ends the show. Later on, Faust manages to give Helen, with whom he has fallen in love, a slightly more substantial presence. Together they live in a secluded castle with their patently allegorical son, Euphorion, who meets with an Icarus-like fate, after which Helen disintegrates once more. These two appearances of the demigoddess from Homer's sensuous, visual myth take place in a dynamic and chaotic present long after the fall of Greek civilization; in the modern world, Helen is a misplaced figment.

In *Faust 2*, Goethe also shows a darker side of Greek myth not usually favoured by classicists: he creates a *klassische Walpurgisnacht*, a Greek equivalent of the annual gathering of German witches in *Faust 1*. Here we see centaurs, sphinxes and other less than Winckelmannian creatures. The action then moves to the sea, where water deities frolic, among them Proteus, who takes on a variety of shapes. Mephisto embodies the power of negation; his shape-shifting is diabolical. Proteus, by contrast, represents an early, oceanic phase of life's development, more replete with

evidence of nature's constant metamorphoses than later ages. As a naturalist, Goethe was a follower of Proteus, recognizing perpetual change in the life of plants, as, for instance, leaves become blossoms. He was opposed to the term *Gestalt* as being too static and final, preferring the more active *Bildung*, which is implicitly linked to the *Umbildung* (transformation) of what already exists (recall the young Schlegel's paean to the perpetual *Anbilden* and *Umbilden* in mythology). Opposing Linnaeus's classification of species as being too rigid and arbitrary, Goethe felt that a focus on nature's protean power of metamorphosis was essential, but also feared the extremes to which this might lead:

The idea of metamorphosis is a venerable, but also highly dangerous gift from above. It leads into formlessness, destroys knowledge, dissolves it. It is a kind of *vis centrifuga* and would lead into infinity, if it did not have a counterweight: I mean the drive towards specificity, the dogged endurance of what has become a reality, a *vis centripeta*.<sup>23</sup>

In the art theory of around 1800, there is a perpetual tension between abandonment and resistance to centrifugal forces. Goethe's fear of the *vis centrifuga* in modern society and culture in many cases led him to worship the centripetal. More interestingly, in *Faust* he positioned himself in the midst of the centrifugal, form-destroying forces of modern history to assemble his own mythology from whatever he could use: elements of Christian as well as classical culture, with some added scientific speculation dressed in mythological garb. Taken together, Goethe's practice and Schlegel-Schellingian theory define a 'modern mythology' that can only exist in plural and in momentary syntheses which have to be wrested from the destructive storm of history. But it is still conceived in terms of *lack*, developed because the perfection of Greek art was no longer attainable, or because the coming mythology was still far away.

However, there were authors who picked up on the potential of an individual mythology without the hesitancy still evident (for different reasons) in Goethe and Schelling, or even Schlegel. For Herman Melville the individual project of an *original mythology* was no longer a poor substitute for a lost golden age or the announcement of a coming collective mythology, but a weapon against the use of myth both in symbolic terms and as poetic *Gesamtkunstwerk*. In Melville's sceptical and ironic variant, myth as art's heteronomous and non-identical side (always more or less

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<sup>23</sup> Goethe, 'Problem und Erwiderung', in Rudolf Steiner, ed., *Goethes Naturwissenschaftliche Schriften*, vol. 1, Dornach 1975, p. 121.

tamed) undergoes a critical turn. To effect this turn, Melville depended on the radical comparative mythology of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, rather than on modern aesthetic myth—of either the proto-formalist or totalizing variety.

### *Indecipherable whale-god*

Towards the end of Melville's *The Confidence-Man. His Masquerade* (1857)—set on a steamboat on the Mississippi—the character known as the Cosmopolitan, after much talk, leaves the boat's barber without paying for his shave. The chapter closes by noting that 'in after days, telling the night's adventure to his friends, the worthy barber always spoke of his queer customer as the man-charmer—as certain East Indians are called snake-charmers—and all his friends united in thinking him QUITE AN ORIGINAL.' This is followed by one of the book's three chapters of what might be called literary theory, entitled *In which the last three words of the last chapter are made the text of discourse, which will be sure of receiving more or less attention from those readers who do not skip it*. Here Melville purports to show 'the impropriety of the phrase, *Quite an Original*, as applied by the barber's friends'.<sup>24</sup> Melville argues that in fiction there are few truly original characters—Hamlet, Don Quixote, Milton's Satan; the term is often used to describe characters that are merely odd. Schelling would have said that these 'true originals' are the centre of their respective mythic worlds; that their authors have succeeded in creating original mythologies. Melville was engaged in precisely such a process, but his myths were no longer substitutes for unattainable ideals; rather, they were aimed against those very ideals. Melville's Cosmopolitan may be original merely in an everyday sense, but the novel's real shape-shifting protagonist, the Confidence Man of whom the Cosmopolitan is an 'avatar', has a substantial claim to being a true original. Though the Cosmopolitan is the Confidence Man's most clearly individualized persona, and the one who is afforded the most space in the novel, it is the strange modern deity of which he is the last incarnation that dominates the book—a shape-shifting modern god who is not recognized as such.

In one of the numerous 'theoretical' asides in *Moby-Dick*—digressions which mock, parody and deconstruct various branches of learning—Ishmael looks at the whale's 'face' as a physiognomist would.

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<sup>24</sup> Herman Melville, *The Confidence-Man. His Masquerade* (1857), Oxford and New York 1989, pp. 316, 319.

'Physiognomically regarded, the Sperm Whale is an anomalous creature. He has no proper nose.' Ishmael realizes that his enterprise seems 'almost as hopeful as for Lavater to have scrutinized the wrinkles on the rock of Gibraltar', but he perseveres. 'In profile, you plainly perceive that horizontal, semi-crescentic depression in the forehead's middle, which, in a man, is Lavater's mark of genius.' All this is of course parody. Ishmael's—and no doubt Melville's—conclusion is pessimistic:

Champollion deciphered the wrinkled granite hieroglyphics. But there is no Champollion to decipher the Egypt of every man's and every being's face. Physiognomy, like every other human science, is but a passing fable.<sup>25</sup>

Lavater's physiognomy, which had attracted Goethe in his youth, claimed to lay bare people's character by studying their facial features, thus basically showing them to be transparent 'symbols'. Although Goethe's enthusiasm cooled off, it foreshadowed his later symbolic aesthetic.<sup>26</sup>

In Melville's time, criticism of physiognomy was hardly a revolutionary act, as the practice had been mercilessly ridiculed for decades. But his lampoon also targets the transformation of the gods into aesthetic symbols. In the whale, the outside form does not even reflect his skeleton, let alone some more profound essence: 'In considering these ribs, I could not but be struck anew with the circumstance, so variously repeated in this book, that the skeleton of the whale is by no means the mould of his invested form.' This applies to all sperm whales, as do Ishmael's physiognomic musings, but in Moby Dick's case it is especially relevant as the latter's god-like, mythical status is a recurring motif in the book. Superstitious whalers declared Moby Dick to be not only omnipresent, but immortal as well.<sup>27</sup> Even though this is presented by Ishmael as superstition, it creates an uncanny atmosphere in which the whale is somehow not quite of this world. Ahab's obsession, of course, greatly contributes to making the whale a mythical opponent, a Leviathan.

This 'godlike' whale is obviously rather different from the idealized symbols of Neoclassicism and from the poetic gods of the Romantic new mythology. After his physiognomic speculations Ishmael remarks that

<sup>25</sup> Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick or The Whale*, New York 1992, pp. 378–80.

<sup>26</sup> David Bindman, *Ape to Apollo, Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the 18th Century*, London 2002, pp. 94–6, Ilsebill Barta Fiedl, 'Lavater, Goethe und der Versuch einer Phystiognomik als Wissenschaft', in Schulze, ed., *Goethe und die Kunst*, pp. 193–203.

<sup>27</sup> Melville, *Moby-Dick*, pp. 494, 198.

the Ancient Egyptians with 'their child-magian thoughts' would no doubt have deified the sperm whale, as they did the Nile crocodile. Here Melville subscribes to the view that myth originated in a childlike 'primitive mind', prone to thinking in sensuous images rather than in terms of abstract causes. However, this state of mind, which was thought still to exist in tropical regions, might return one day even in 'civilized' countries:

If hereafter any highly cultured, poetical nation shall lure back to their birth-right, the merry May-day gods of old; and livingly enthrone them again in the now egotistical sky; in the now unhaunted hill; then be sure, exalted to Jove's high seat, the great Sperm Whale shall lord it.<sup>28</sup>

Such a grotesque new mythology, a bizarre blend of the primitive and the 'highly cultured', could only have been concocted by an author who was passionately interested in questions of the 'primitive mind' and of comparative mythology. The influence of Pierre Bayle's subtle debunking of myth and religious dogma on Melville has been noted, but also that of comparative mythologists such as William Jones, who attempted to defend Christian tradition against claims that Biblical stories were just versions of myths current in several cultures.<sup>29</sup> While Melville did not subscribe to the apologists' attempts to separate Christianity as revealed truth from all other religions, they provided him with a wealth of information on the myths of the world, and with a subversive potential he put to good use.

In *Moby-Dick*, Melville ridicules many myths in a Bayle-like manner through his narrator Ishmael, but on the other hand the Osiris myth helps to structure the novel. The dismemberment of Osiris by Typhon is uncannily repeated in the story of the god-like monster and Ahab. Drawing both on Plutarch, who tried to divine the rationale behind myths that were already alien to him, and on Thomas Maurice's *Indian Antiquities*, Melville created a modern myth that is also various old myths.<sup>30</sup> Ahab not only sees Moby Dick as a malignant god; he, as the self-ordained opponent, also claims a divine role. Here and in *The Confidence-Man*, Melville uses comparative mythology—setting Christ next to Krishna and Osiris—to subvert the search for an essence of myth, for order in the confusion

<sup>28</sup> Melville, *Moby-Dick*, p. 380.

<sup>29</sup> H. Bruce Franklin, *The Wake of the Gods. Melville's Mythology*, Stanford 1963, pp. 8, 66-7, 169-75.

<sup>30</sup> Franklin, *Wake of the Gods*, pp. 71-83. Franklin's book, although sometimes overreaching in its interpretations, is still the most fundamental study of this aspect of Melville's work.

of the world's mythologies. If, according to comparative mythology, all myths are simply variations on a few basic patterns, why not create a new version? If Christ is merely Osiris in disguise, why not dress him in nineteenth-century garb? If it were really to be a *modern* myth, this would have to be radically individual, self-critical and demythologizing; and it would have to take into account the tension between a disenchanted world and mythic cravings. The field for this operation is a literary one; for Melville, not unlike Schelling, myths existed to become literature. However, his conception of literature was different from Schelling's: for Melville, it is a constant questioning, and if myths exist to become literature, it is because that is where they become self-critical.

### *Proteus on the Mississippi*

As Robert Wallace has demonstrated, Melville took visual art and art criticism very seriously, especially Turner's 'powerful aesthetic of the indistinct'.<sup>11</sup> The ironical description and interpretation of the Turneresque 'boggy, soggy' painting in the 'Spouter-Inn' chapter of *Moby-Dick* constitute a homage to, but also a radicalization of the visual ambiguities and marvellous atmospheric effects in Turner's works, so eloquently described by Ruskin. These paintings suggested a visual sphere that was non-symbolic, in which forms or the absence of forms can suggest ideas without embodying them in a transparent way. Melville took this aesthetic a stage further. The whale's exterior does not reflect its skeleton, and Moby Dick's divine status is a matter of literary suggestion; it could not convincingly be conveyed by a painter, since even the whiteness of the whale functions as an attribute of divinity only within Melville's narrative. There is a sense of *paragone* in Melville, as if he seeks to demonstrate that literature can pierce through appearances more thoroughly than painting. In *The Confidence-Man*, he developed a protagonist whose quasi-divine status is invisible to virtually all of the other characters (the mysterious boy in the last chapter being an exception). To really see the Confidence Man, one must *read* Melville's narrative. The characters in the narrative cannot see him for what he is—although what he is exactly is hardly unambiguous even to readers.

*The Confidence-Man* apparently has several consecutive protagonists who, it is strongly hinted, are all the same person in disguise. His skill at disguising himself in extremely different ways in a short space of time (including

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Wallace, *Melville and Turner. Spheres of Love and Fright*, Athens, GA 1992.

a black cripple who mentions a series of people usually seen as alternative guises of the Confidence Man), combined with the fact that his schemes seem ridiculously elaborate and his profits small, makes him appear more than human. Like *Moby Dick*, the Confidence Man's ubiquity and elusiveness give him the characteristics of a mythical figure, of a god. The tone is set in the first sentence, when the 'mute' protagonist is compared to the mythical founder of the Inca empire, Manco Capac. As a (pseudo-) god, the Confidence Man is related to Proteus, and one of his avatars makes a sales pitch for a 'protean easy-chair' that perfectly adapts itself to any body. But many modern critics have preferred to identify him with that other shape-shifter, Satan. The work would then become an allegory with the devil as its protagonist, which would 'normalize' this outrageous book: 'given Satan's reputation as a shape-shifter and evildoer, the incongruous nature of the title character in his various disguises would merely be the result of a supernatural capacity for fraud and deception.'<sup>32</sup>

The fact that Milton's Satan is one of Melville's examples of an original character strengthens this association, but in the end it cannot be entirely convincing. What matters is precisely that the Confidence Man is too shape-shifting for any single conventional identity, whether it be Proteus or Satan. Their formlessness was in a sense formalized by their mythological identities; here there is no identity, only a Rorschach blot. *The Confidence-Man* frustrates any hope for a new collective mythology as *Gesamtkunstwerk*; he is not even recognized as a divinity. He is the metamorphic principle driven to an extreme, Goethe's *Umbildung* out of control. The shape-shifting even goes so far that, as Bruce Franklin has noted, it has been suggested that the people who confront the Cosmopolitan, the main character in the second part of the book and an avatar of the Confidence Man, are in fact (also?) the Confidence Man himself.<sup>33</sup> The latter is various gods and no god in particular, thanks to the ammunition provided by comparative mythology.

Melville's pseudo-gods are constructed out of historical debris. As such, they are eminently modern divinities. According to Schelling, the Greek gods were natural deities (*Naturwesen*), and only became truly mythological in epic form, when they acted and created a history. Before, they were not true *Götter* but mere *Götzen* (idols). By contrast, the Christian world is a historical and spiritual one; whatever form of polytheism is possible here is only so in history. The modern world's deities are thus

<sup>32</sup> Tom Quirk, *Melville's Confidence-Man*, Columbia, MO 1982, pp. 58–9.

<sup>33</sup> Franklin, *The Wake of the Gods*, p. 164.

*Geschichtsgötter*.<sup>34</sup> Ancient artists created a mythology by endowing natural gods with a history, or histories; modern artists have to perform the opposite operation and 'plant the Idealist gods into nature' in order to give them some reality. Writers like Cervantes and Goethe succeeded in creating their own 'mythological circles' under these conditions. Schelling hoped for a future *Mythologie und Symbolik* based on science, in which the allegorical tendency of Christianity (from the real to the ideal, that is: real subjects pointing towards an unrepresentable ideal sphere) is reversed into symbolic wholeness (from the ideal to the real: the ideal is incarnated into real objects, thus creating symbols). Authors such as Dante, Cervantes and Goethe have as it were given us individual, 'original' intimations of such a new symbolic mythology. Have they not given the fleeting ideal deities of the modern world aesthetic substance, turning them into something more organic than allegories?

Part of Melville's greatness lies in the way in which he makes it virtually impossible to answer this question with regard to his 'original' mythologies. As a creator of 'poetic' new mythologies, Melville is closer to Schelling than to Goethe's attempt to create a canon of subjects for visual art on the basis of an existing literary mythology. But in the end Schelling, like Goethe, longed for a positive, symbolic presence of myth in art—and Melville's modern gods mock any such yearnings, whether in visual art or literature. Only too often have Romantic and post-Romantic writers and artists sought such presence and wholeness, thereby reducing to sameness, to a preformed cliché of the non-identical, the otherness they held up as a contrast to the disenchanted modern world. The early Friedrich Schlegel with his celebration of irony and allegory is perhaps closest to Melville among the early Romantics and Idealists, but with Schlegel, too, signs in the end only have value in so far as they point towards the absolute, even if they do not embody it in a symbolic form. Moreover, in the new mythology all signs eventually have to form an organism, the chaotic, *umbildende* allegories settling into a *Gestalt*, a symbol.

This goal is not on Melville's horizon. The presence of his fleeting modern deities is a negative one, a looming absence. The gods do not become 'plastic'; they refuse to take on a positive form. Neither is their elusiveness turned into a rhetorical manifestation of the sacred. They are not an allegorical arrow pointing towards the Idea or an announcement of a coming organic community. Moby Dick, whose exterior form does not

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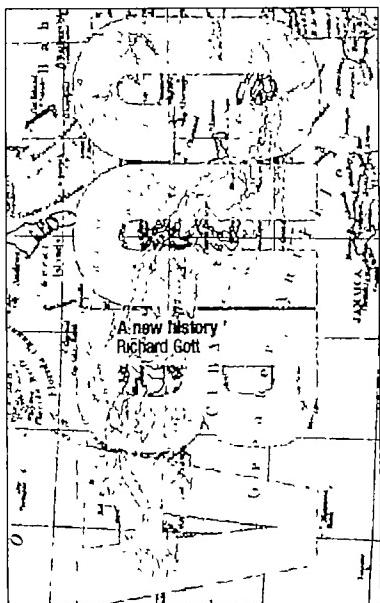
<sup>34</sup> Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, p. 448.

reflect his skeleton, is a figment, a blank spot; the Confidence Man has no form of his own. If Laocoönist mythology uses symbols to keep the arts separate while preventing them from collapsing into complete isolation, and the *Gesamtkunstwerk* approach struggles with allegorical fragments while dreaming of a true collective mythology beyond modern atomization and specialization, Melville's 'gods' create confusion between the visual and the literary, undermining one with the other, offering no hope. These are the decoded, desymbolized gods of capitalist modernity.

One can argue that a 'new mythology' has effectively been realized in ways that exacerbate the dubious aspects of late eighteenth-century dreams regarding myth, their conservative and coercive sides. A rather divergent group of twentieth-century authors has suggested that what has taken root is not a new mythology created by artists but a remythologization courtesy of capitalism, spectacle or the mass media. McLuhan's work, for instance, drew attention to a 'mythical' media universe which seems to mock the dream of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* and the project of Laocoönist distinction alike. Adorno and Horkheimer analysed how, in advanced capitalism, instrumentalized reason reverts to myth; a different version of this dialectic of enlightenment was developed in the Situationist International by Debord and Raoul Vaneigem, who describe spectacle as 'fragmented and desacralized myth', and the 'pseudo-cyclic time' of spectacle as a perversion of modern historical time.<sup>35</sup> From such a perspective, artistic attempts to create a new mythology, which resurfaced in late surrealism, can only be seen as delusional. As the English Situationists put it in 1967, true modern art can only be 'an explosion at the centre of the mythic constellation', not an attempt to renew it.<sup>36</sup> More modern than much that came later, Melville's work is such an explosion. If Melville reassembles the exploded fragments, the result lays no claim to being a mythic totality; it creates what Barthes would have called a 'true mythology', one that steals myth and creates new montages of *mythos* and *logos*.

<sup>35</sup> Raoul Vaneigem, 'Banalités de base (II)', in *Internationale Situationniste* no. 8, January 1963, p. 37; Debord, *La Société du spectacle*, Paris 1992, pp. 125–60.

<sup>36</sup> Tim Clark, Christopher Gray, Charles Radcliffe, Donald Nicholson-Smith, *The Revolution of Modern Art and the Modern Art of Revolution* (1967), available at [www.situationist.cjb.net](http://www.situationist.cjb.net)



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GÉRARD DUMÉNIL AND DOMINIQUE LÉVY

## NEOLIBERAL INCOME TRENDS

### *Wealth, Class and Ownership in the USA*

**I**N MANY RESPECTS, the emergence of neoliberalism since the mid-1970s has enhanced the legibility of capitalist social relationships.<sup>1</sup> New disciplines have been imposed on both workers and management. Capital incomes—dividends and interest—have dramatically increased. During the 1970s, nominal interest rates remained practically equal to inflation rates; Paul Volcker's 1979 'coup' imposed a massive hike in real interest rates, to the benefit of lenders. Larger flows of dividends began to be diverted to shareholders. The US stock market rose steadily, up to the bubble of the 1990s. The opening of commercial frontiers and the free movement of capital issued in a new stage in the globalization of the economy, accompanied by further disequilibria and imperial war. A comparison with the postwar decades suggests that, after twenty years of neoliberalism, incomes originating in the ownership and control of the means of production skyrocketed, and capitalist relations of production rule the world even more rigorously than before.

However, other developments in contemporary capitalism, it has been argued, may serve to blur class frontiers. In this account, neoliberalism has seen the emergence of a new layer of the 'working rich', capitalists who now receive much of their income in the form of wages, as other workers do. If they also get a large 'partnership' income, the same can be said of doctors and lawyers. Of course, they also benefit from capital income and capital gains—but so, too, do many other wage-earners. Capital ownership itself has been increasingly diffused downwards, both directly and indirectly, through devices such as mutual and pension funds. This in turn is said to have created a new mass layer of

shareholders, salaried workers who now share, to a significant extent, the interests of the owners of the means of production.

This paper attempts to assess these claims by analysing the historical trends in capital ownership and income in the United States, centre and powerhouse of the neoliberal transformation. It suggests that class relations remain as strong as ever under the neoliberal social order, but that they have undergone a distinct reconfiguration. The cohesion between the uppermost layers—those which we have dubbed the ‘ownership-management interface’—and a broader, subordinate tier of the ‘upper salaried classes’ has been strengthened, and the gap between this bloc and the mass of the population below it has been widened. Neoliberalism has been the vector for the emergence of this ‘two-tier capitalism’ as a new framework for social relations, the institutional expression of the compact between capitalist and upper-salaried classes versus the rest.

### *Patterns of income inequality*

What, first of all, is the actual composition of household income in the US, from top to bottom of the social pyramid? Table 1 presents a breakdown of incomes for 2001, with and without capital gains. For the great mass of the population—98 per cent, around 125 million households—with an annual gross income of less than \$200,000, wages, including pensions, account for 90.7 per cent of income; this figure is barely altered (to 89.6 per cent) when capital gains are included. Turning to the remaining 2 per cent—just over 2 million households—whose tax return is above \$200,000 dollars, wages still account for nearly two-thirds of annual income, or 64.1 per cent, although this now falls to 52.8 per cent with capital gains included. Even at the very apex of the pyramid—the top 0.005 per cent (6,836 households) with incomes of over \$10 million—wages still account for 50.1 per cent, excluding capital gains; the figure drops to 25.3 per cent when they are included. Figure 1 (overleaf) shows the dramatic expansion of capital income and gains as components of income, once the threshold of \$200,000 is passed.

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<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere, we have interpreted the new social order that has emerged within the vector of neoliberalism as the reassertion of the power, income and wealth of the ruling classes, after a relative setback during the decades of the Keynesian compromise. The title of our *Capital Resurgent. Roots of the Neoliberal Revolution*, Cambridge, MA 2004, refers to this new capitalist hubris.

TABLE I: Composition of income in 2001 (%)

## A. Income without capital gains

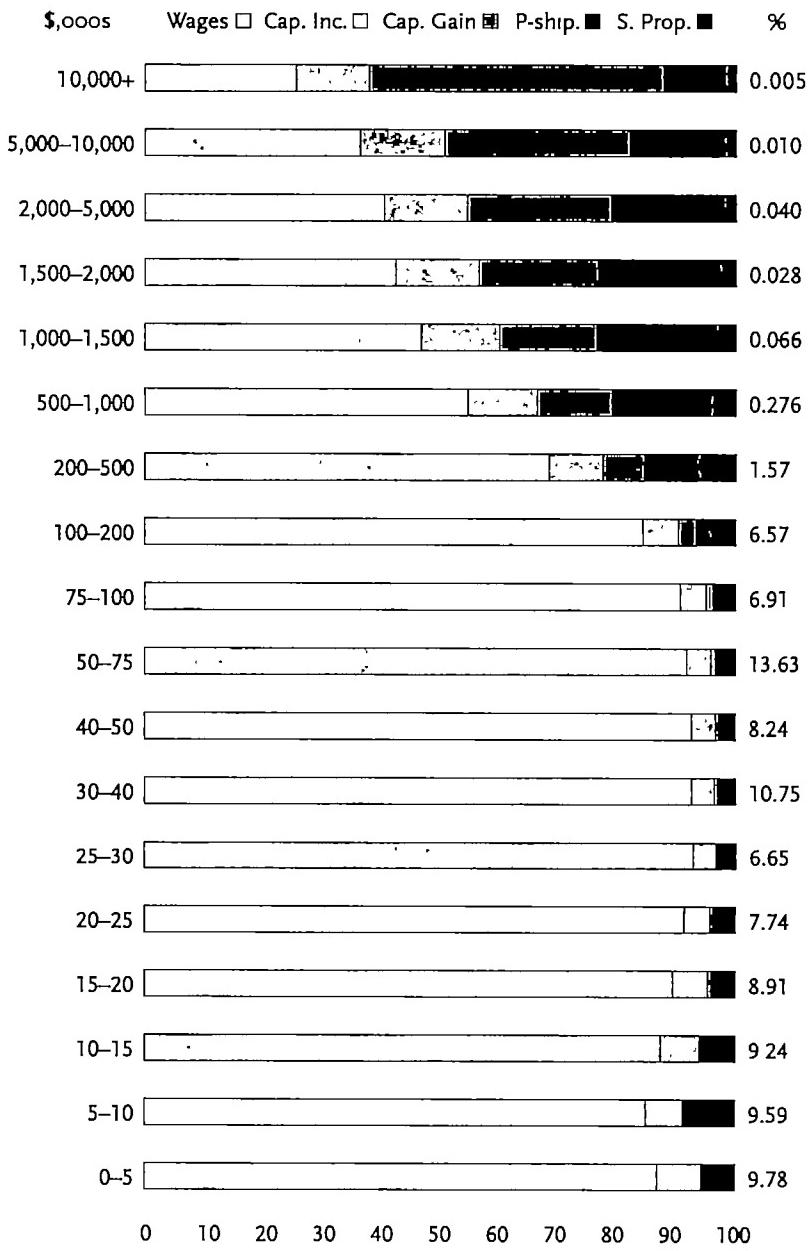
Gross income (thousands of \$)	% of returns	Wages	Capital income	P-ship. income	S. prop. income	Other
under 200	98.01	90.7	4.8	1.0	3.3	0.2
200 or more	1.99	64.1	13.6	16.7	4.5	1.1
200–500	1.57	73.1	9.7	10.2	6.2	0.8
500–1,000	0.276	62.2	13.1	19.6	4.2	0.9
1,000–1,500	0.066	55.2	15.6	24.4	3.3	1.5
1,500–2,000	0.028	52.7	17.4	26.2	2.6	1.2
2,000–5,000	0.040	52.8	18.4	25.5	2.0	1.3
5,000–10,000	0.010	52.2	20.3	23.9	1.7	1.9
10,000+	0.005	50.1	24.1	21.5	2.3	2.1
All returns	100.0	85.6	6.5	4.0	3.5	0.4

## B. Income with capital gains

Gross income (thousands of \$)	% of returns	Wages	Capital income	Capital gains	P-ship. income	S. prop. income	Other
under 200	98.01	89.6	4.7	1.2	1.0	3.3	0.2
200 or more	1.99	52.8	11.2	17.6	13.7	3.7	0.9
0–5	9.78	95.2	8.1	-0.3	-1.3	4.5	-6.2
5–10	9.59	85.8	6.4	0.1	-0.3	8.5	-0.5
10–15	9.24	87.5	6.6	0.4	-0.1	5.5	0.0
15–20	8.91	89.5	6.0	0.6	0.1	3.8	0.1
20–25	7.74	91.3	4.4	0.5	0.2	3.6	0.1
25–30	6.65	92.9	3.7	0.4	0.2	2.7	0.1
30–40	10.75	92.5	3.8	0.5	0.2	2.8	0.1
40–50	8.24	92.5	4.0	0.5	0.4	2.4	0.2
50–75	13.63	91.7	4.0	0.8	0.7	2.6	0.3
75–100	6.91	90.4	4.4	1.1	1.0	2.8	0.4
100–200	6.57	84.1	6.0	2.9	2.7	3.9	0.4
200–500	1.57	67.9	9.1	7.1	9.4	5.8	0.7
500–1,000	0.276	54.4	11.5	12.5	17.1	3.6	0.8
1,000–1,500	0.066	46.3	13.0	16.2	20.4	2.7	1.3
1,500–2,000	0.028	42.1	13.9	20.1	20.9	2.1	0.9
2,000–5,000	0.040	40.1	14.0	24.1	19.3	1.5	1.0
5,000–10,000	0.010	36.1	14.0	31.0	16.5	1.2	1.3
10,000+	0.005	25.3	12.1	49.5	10.8	1.2	1.1
All returns	100.0	81.4	6.2	4.8	3.8	3.4	0.3

P-ship partnership, S prop sole proprietor Wages salaries and wages + pensions, Capital income interest + dividends + rent + royalties + estate and trust, Partnership income Partnership and S-Corporation income (see footnote 9), Income net income minus loss The total number of returns was 128,817,050 Source IRS, Individual Tax Statistics, Data by Size of Income, table 14, 2001 Individual Income Tax, All Returns, www.irs.gov

FIGURE I: Composition of income per bracket, \$,000s and % of returns

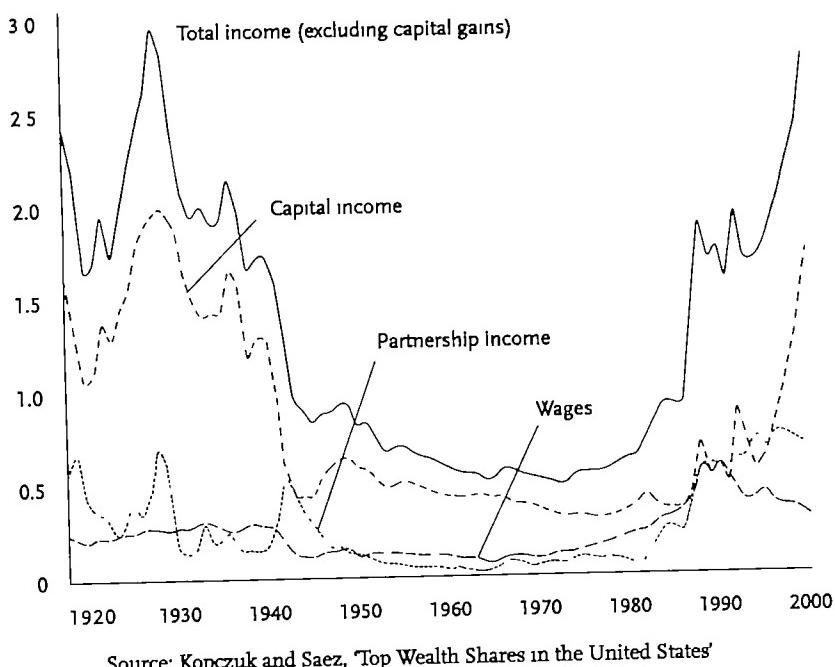


P-ship. partnership, S. prop: sole proprietor

Placing this breakdown of top-level income in historical perspective allows us to trace the variations in this income pattern over time.<sup>2</sup> Figure 2 shows both the share of total US household income received by the top 0.01 per cent since World War I, and its component parts.<sup>3</sup> It suggests a periodization of three stages:

- I. Before World War II, the concentration of income was very strong, with the top 0.01 per cent accruing some 2.2 per cent of total US

FIGURE 2: *The top 0.01 per cent income share in total household income: total income (excluding capital gains) and three components, 1918–2000*



Source: Kopczuk and Saez, 'Top Wealth Shares in the United States'

<sup>2</sup> In what follows, we draw extensively on the path-breaking work of Thomas Piketty and Emmanuel Saez, which uses IRS tax returns to construct, for the first time, a homogenous series of US household income shares for 1913–98. See Piketty and Saez, 'Income Inequality in the United States, 1913–1998', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. cxviii, no. 1, 2003. See also Wojciech Kopczuk and Emmanuel Saez, 'Top Wealth Shares in the United States, 1916–2000: Evidence from Estate Tax Returns', NBER Working Paper no. 10399, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> In 2000, the average annual income (excluding capital gains) of the 13,447 individuals who composed this 0.01 per cent was \$12,984,220.

household income. Most of this fractile's income for this period consisted of capital income; on average, capital income and capital gains, taken together, accounted for 72 per cent of the group's total income for 1918–40.

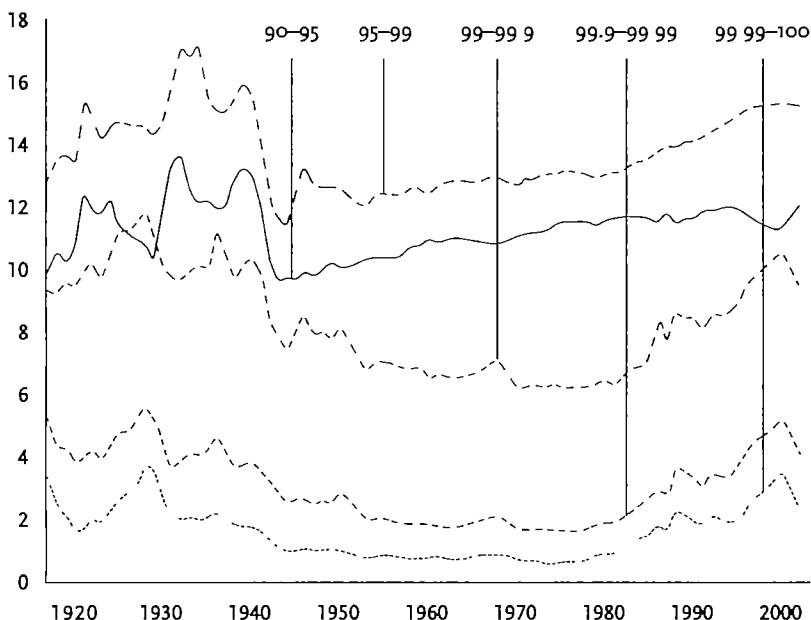
2. During World War II, there was a spectacular reduction in the percentage of total US household income received by the top 0.01 per cent fractile, to 'only' 0.6 per cent—with no sign of recovery before the early 1980s. This was a consequence of the decline of capital income, slashed to a quarter of its pre-war level (i.e. from an average 1.51 per cent before 1940 to 0.42 per cent for 1950–79), and of wages, which were halved during World War II. In the postwar decades, the concentration of capital income continued to unravel.
3. Inequality was re-established during the last two decades of the 20th century, with the top 0.01 per cent fractile receiving 2.8 per cent of total US household income by 2000, but this restoration of privileges for households with the highest incomes took a completely new form. Abstracting from the ephemeral rise of capital income in the late 1980s, the concentration of wages and entrepreneurship income increased tremendously. By 1999, the top 0.01 per cent received 11.3 per cent of total US household entrepreneurship income, and 1.6 per cent of total US wages. 'Wages' skyrocketed during the second half of the 1990s, reflecting both their upward trend and the large distribution of stock options.<sup>4</sup>

How does this pattern compare to historical shares of income for broader layers of the US population? Figure 3 shows the trajectories for various fractiles within the top 90–100 per cent of US households. Here, a clear distinction emerges, first, between the lower two fractiles, 90–95 and 95–99, and the top 1 per cent (99–99.9, 99.9–99.99 and 99.99–100). In contrast to the continuing slow decline experienced by the top 1 per cent in the postwar decades, the share of income accruing to the 90–95 and 95–99 fractiles grew steadily from 1945 (in spite of the limited divergence from the beginning of the 1980s). The common profile of

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<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that the profile observed here for the US is also apparent, to a lesser extent, in the UK and Canada, but not in France, the Netherlands or Switzerland. See Emmanuel Saez, 'Income and Wealth Concentration in a Historical and International Perspective', Berkeley and NBER, paper prepared for the Berkeley Symposium 'Distribution of Income and Public Policy'; and Edward Wolff, ed., *International Perspectives on Household Wealth*, forthcoming.

FIGURE 3. *Shares in total household income, including capital gains, received by various sections of the top decile, 1917–2002*



Source: Piketty and Saez, 'Income Inequality', table A2

the three fractiles composing the top 1 per cent is striking and can be explained by their similar income composition. In 2000, the average income of the top 1 per cent, including capital gains, was \$833,140.<sup>5</sup> Between 1917 and 1940, this fractile had received on average 16.9 per cent of total us household income; this fell to an average 10.9 per cent during the first postwar decade, 1946–55, and to 8.4 per cent in 1973; it then soared to reach 19.6 per cent in 2001.

### *Unpacking 'partnership'*

The importance of partnership income for the top fractions of the us population, documented in Table 1 above, requires some explanation. In 2001, the income of the top 1.99 per cent, including capital gains, consisted of 13.7 per cent partnership income, compared to 11.2 per cent

<sup>5</sup> See Piketty and Saez, 'Income Inequality', table A5.

for capital income.<sup>6</sup> Here, it is useful to break down partnership income by industry, using IRS data (see Table 2).

TABLE 2. *Partnership income and composition by industry in 2001 (\$bns)*

	All indust- ries	All indust- except FIRE	FIRE		
		Real estate	Core finance	Other finance	
No. of partners (thousands)	14,232	4,657	6,444	3,019	112
Total assets	8,428	2,085	2,069	4,114	161
Partners' capital accounts	3,593	884	522	2,126	60
Total net income	310	129	70	105	7
Net income from trade/business	114	93	0	16	5
Portfolio income dist. to partners	153	34	29	88	2
Rental real estate income	43	1	41	1	0

FIRE finance, insurance and real estate, or real estate, core finance, and other finance. 'Core' partnership finance (engaged in contracts such as 'hedging', transactions on securities on various markets, and the management of portfolios of securities) is made up of two industries (1) securities, commodity contracts and other financial investment and related activity; and (2) funds, trusts and other financial vehicles. Totals may not equal sum of components due to rounding

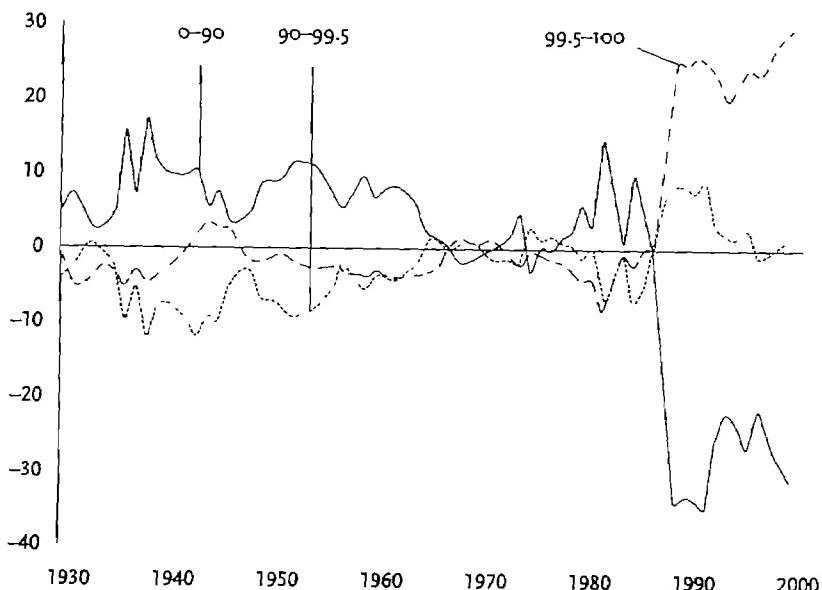
A first observation is that 'partnership' predominantly relates to ownership and financial activity. Of the \$8,428 billion total assets, only \$2,085 billion correspond to industries other than FIRE; of the \$3,593 billion of partners' capital accounts, only \$884 billion relate to industries other than FIRE—in both instances, around 25 per cent. Core finance alone represents 59.2 per cent of total partners' capital accounts. This industry comprises 33.7 per cent of the total net income, and 57.8 per cent of total portfolio income distributed to partners. The scale of this sector should be emphasized: the \$2,126 billion of partners' capital accounts amounts to 23 per cent of the total net worth of US non-farm, non-financial corporations, and just over the total net worth (104 per cent) of financial corporations.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The income of the top 0.426 per cent, i.e., those receiving over \$500,000, consisted of 22.6 per cent partnership income and 17.0 per cent capital income.

<sup>7</sup> Duménil and Lévy, 'The Real and Financial Components of Profitability (USA 1948–2000)', *Review of Radical Political Economy*, no. 36, 2004. Financial corporations here exclude government institutions and mutual and pension funds.

Secondly, the importance of this (largely finance-based) partnership income needs to be set in historical perspective. Figure 4 shows the dramatic transformation of the content and distribution of partnership income that occurred in 1987, with the rush of the top fractiles into partnership. Three separated income fractiles are considered: 0–90, 90–99.5 and 99.5–100, or the top half per cent. The variable is the percentage of total partnership income received by each fractile, but each series has been normalized to 0 in 1986. The figure clearly outlines the contours of the break between 1986 and 1987. Between 1986 and 1999 the 0–90 fractile lost 31 per cent, while the top 0.5 per cent fractile gained 29 per cent of the total partnership income.<sup>8</sup> Note that the earlier pattern remained stable from 1929 to 1986.

FIGURE 4. Percentage of total household partnership income received by each fractile (deviation from 1986), 1929–99



Each series has been normalized to 0 in 1986. The percentages in 1986 were 45.4 per cent for the fractile 0–90, 38.3 per cent for 90–99.5, and 16.3 per cent for 99.5–100. The sudden fall of the curve (—) means, for example, that the share of partnership income accruing to the 0–90 fractile fell from 45.4 per cent in 1986 to 12.0 per cent in 1988. Source: Piketty and Saez, 'Income Inequality', table A7.

<sup>8</sup>The top 0.01 per cent income fractile garnered 1 per cent of total partnership income in the 1970s, and 5.3 per cent in 1986; in 1999 this figure reached 11.2 per cent.

The mid-1980s transfer of wealth by the top fractions of the population into the 'partnership' sector contributed extensively to the restoration of income inequality. The shift was, in fact, a move from one type of organization to another: C-corporations to S-corporations, which are treated jointly with partnership. This shift was motivated by the Tax Reform Act of 1986, whose purpose was a reduction of taxes on high incomes.<sup>9</sup>

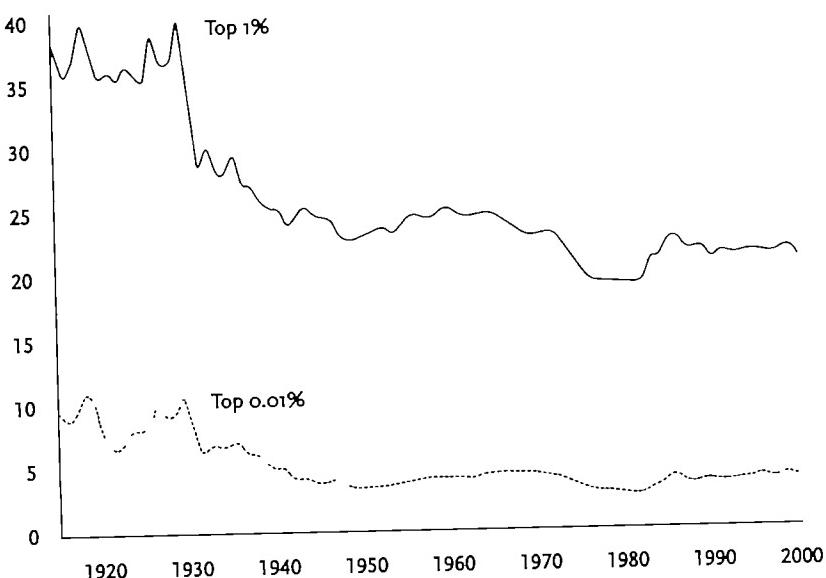
### *Secular wealth equalization?*

If the top percentile's share of total US household income fell substantially during the postwar decades, only to be restored from 1980 on, the same percentile's share of total US household *wealth* displays a different pattern. Figure 5 shows the percentage of total US household wealth held by the 0.01 per cent and 1 per cent richest fractions.<sup>10</sup> It illustrates the dramatic decline of the concentration of wealth during the Great Depression (instead of World War II, as in the case of income), for both the top 0.01 per cent and 1 per cent. This fall continued, more gradually, up to the end of World War II. From an average 37 per cent of total US household wealth held by the richest 1 per cent for 1916–30, the figure fell to 24.7 per cent in 1945 (and, respectively, from 8.9 per cent to 3.7 per cent for the richest 0.01 per cent). A new diminution occurred in the 1970s, compounded by the effects of inflation which, it should be noted, are not considered here. This was followed by a partial recovery from the mid-1980s—although the percentages of total wealth held still remained

<sup>9</sup> See the discussion of these mechanisms by Saez: 'A C-corporation faces corporate tax on its profits. Profits are then taxed again at the individual level if paid out as dividends. If profits are retained in the corporation, they must generate capital gains that are taxed at the individual level but in general more favourably than dividends, when they are realized. Profits from S-corporations (or partnerships and sole proprietors) are taxed directly and solely at the individual level. Distribution from S-corporations to individual owners generates no additional tax.' See Emmanuel Saez, 'Reported Incomes and Marginal Tax Rates, 1960–2000: Evidence and Policy Implications', NBER Working Paper no. 10273, pp. 8, 28, in James Poterba, ed., *Tax Policy and the Economy*, vol. 18, Cambridge, MA 2004. Saez comments: 'In the early 1980s, the top 0.01 per cent incomes were facing extremely high marginal tax rates of about 80 per cent on average (while tax rates on long-term capital gains were around 25 per cent). Thus, dividends were a very disadvantaged form of income for the rich'.

<sup>10</sup> In 2000, the wealth of the individual at the bottom of the richest 1 per cent amounted to \$1,172,896. The wealth of the individual at the bottom of the 0.01 per cent was \$24,415,150, while the average wealth of the 20,187 individuals that compose the top 0.01 per cent was \$63,564,151.

FIGURE 5. *The top 0.01 and 1 per cent shares of total household wealth, 1916–2000*



Source: Kopczuk and Saez, 'Top Wealth Shares in the United States', table B1.

below the level of the 1960s. In other words, the top percentiles' comparative share of income was restored in the last two decades of the 20th century, but not their comparative share of wealth.<sup>11</sup>

If we look, however, at the very peak of the pyramid, a much more significant reconcentration of wealth takes place during the neoliberal period. This phenomenon is illustrated by the Forbes measure of the share of household wealth held by the richest four hundred families, shown in

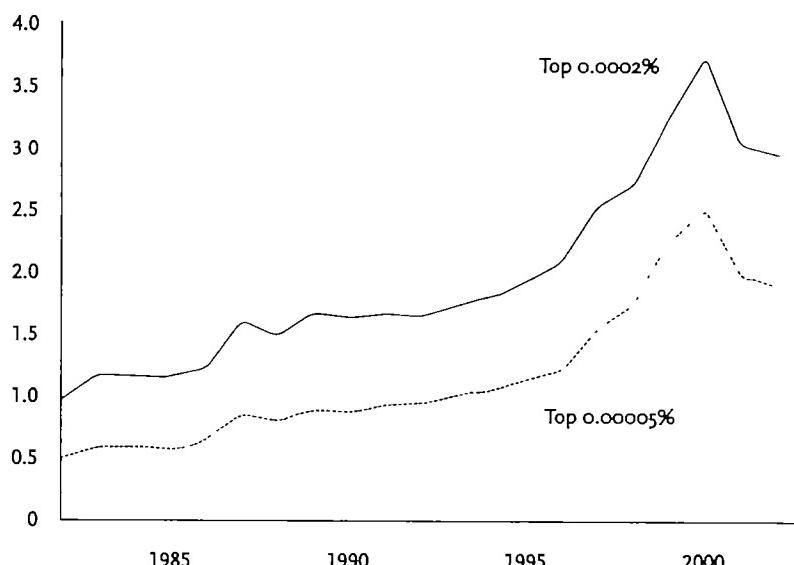
<sup>11</sup> 'The inequality of net worth levelled off even though income inequality continued to rise over this period': Edward Wolff, 'Changes in Household Wealth in the 1980s and 1990s in the us', in Wolff, ed., *International Perspectives on Household Wealth*. The components of this wealth have remained relatively stable. For the period 1916–2000, stock shares comprised around 46 per cent of the wealth held by the top 0.5 per cent; bonds, 29 per cent; and physical wealth, 21 per cent; the debt was 9 per cent (plus miscellaneous assets, 13 per cent). There were of course significant short-term fluctuations: the fraction of stock shares in this group's total wealth peaked at 63 per cent in the mid-1960s, fell to 35 per cent in 1982 (30 per cent in 1990), and gradually recovered during the 1990s to 48 per cent in 1998 (44 per cent in 2000).

Figure 6. The first curve plots the percentage of total US household wealth held by the top 404 households—a mere 0.0002 per cent of the population. While these families held 1 per cent of total household wealth in 1983, this rose to around 3 per cent in 2003, after a peak of 3.7 per cent in 2000. It is interesting to compare this profile to that of two components of this group: the top 101 richest and the fraction ranked between 102 and 404. Although the fraction of total US household wealth held by the second component (102–404) doubled, from 0.5 per cent in 1982 to slightly more than 1 per cent in 2002, that of the top 100 quadrupled, from 0.5 per cent to 1.9 per cent. Overall, the rise was very sharp during the second half of the 1990s.

### *Top salaries*

Among the most publicized of the new trends in top income distribution has been the soaring rates of Chief Executive Officers' pay. Figure 7 illustrates the rise in pay of the top 100 CEOs, as a ratio to the average US salary. The pay of the various CEO rankings grew at more or less the same

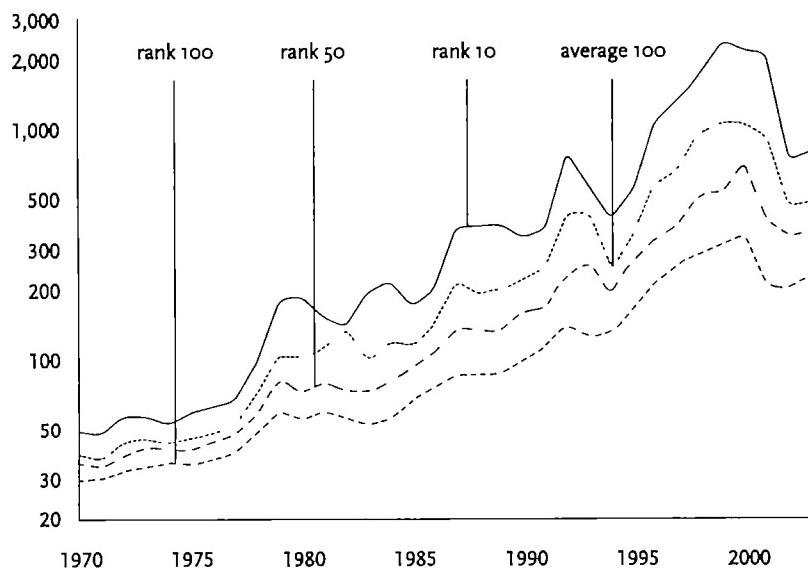
FIGURE 6. *Shares of total household wealth held by the 400 and 100 richest households, 1982–2002*



Figures for 2000 include the top 404 and 101 households. Source: Kopczuk and Saez, 'Top Wealth Shares in the United States', table c2.

rate. In 1971, the pay of the tenth CEO amounted to 47 times the average salary; by 1999 it was 2,381 times as great. A crucial component of these soaring rates of remuneration has, of course, been stock options. Again, this development needs to be historicized. A very clear break occurred towards the end of the 1970s. In 1977, the distribution of shares (as stock options or under other forms) still amounted to 'only' 20 per cent of CEOs' total pay. In 1979, this percentage suddenly rose to 40.5 per cent (while the rise of salaries was in no way slowed down). By 1999, salaries represented only 9.7 per cent of the total pay of CEOs (although note that the salary of the tenth CEO was over \$10 million); stock options accounted for 58.5 per cent, and other shares for 31.8 per cent, of the total pay.<sup>12</sup> This rise of top 'remunerations' was so concentrated at the apex of the hierarchy, and so accentuated, that it can hardly be interpreted as a

FIGURE 7. *Pay of CEOs of various rankings (ratio to the average salary of all wage-earners), 1970–2002*



The first three curves show the rise of the pay of CEOs according to their rank in the hierarchy of remunerations: 10th, 50th and 100th. The fourth curve corresponds to the average pay of the 100 CEOs with the highest remunerations. Note that 1,000 means 1,000 times the average salary. Source: Piketty and Saez, 'Income Inequality', table B4.

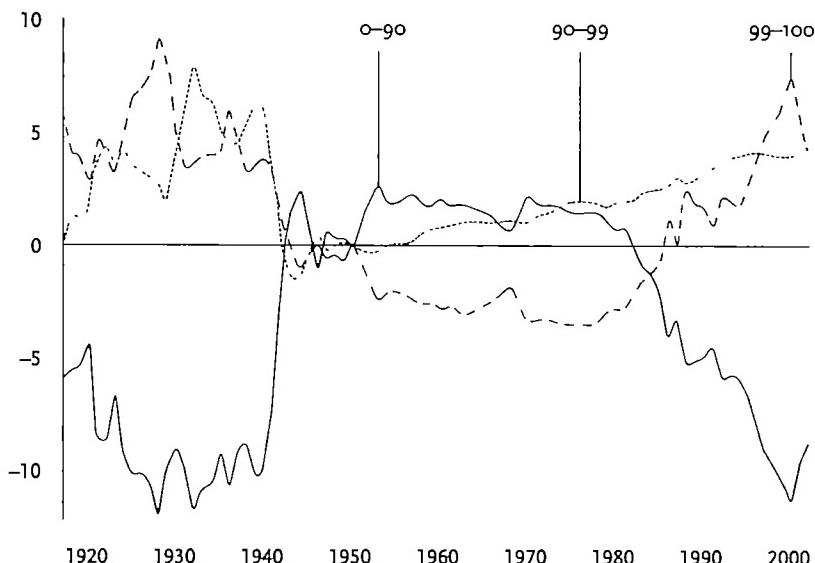
<sup>12</sup> Piketty and Saez, 'Income Inequality', table B4.

reward for improved managerial skills—or for rising ‘marginal productivity’, in the neoclassical jargon, measured by the hike of stock prices. Rather, what is at stake is a privileged device to channel surplus towards a fraction of the ruling elite.

### *Bulk of the income pyramid*

Turning now to the vast majority of the population, what further trends can be distinguished? Figure 8 shows the percentages of total US household income accruing to three fractiles, with no overlapping: 0–90, 90–99, and 99–100. All series have been normalized to 0 for 1950. Most striking here is the huge shift that occurred during World War II. The comparative rise in the share of income received by the fractile 0–90, a gain of 10 per cent, is paralleled by the decline of both the 90–99 and the top 1 per cent. Relatively speaking, of course, the top 1 per cent of households were more adversely affected than the 90–99 fractile, since

FIGURE 8. *Shares of total household income, including capital gains, received by three fractiles (deviation from 1950), 1917–2002*



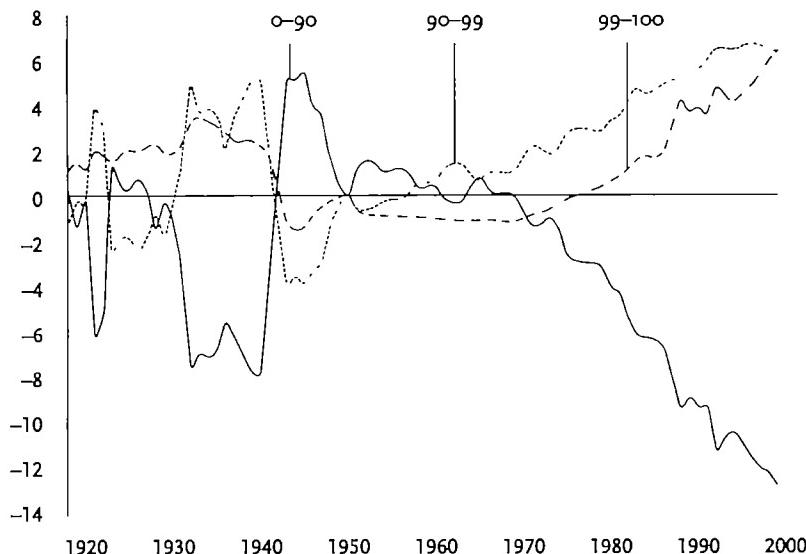
All series normalized to 0 for 1950. In 1950, the values were 65.4 per cent for the fractile 0–90; 22.6 per cent for 90–99; and 12.0 per cent for 99–100. Source: Piketty and Saez, ‘Income Inequality’, table A2.

both sets lost some 5 per cent of total us household income, but among the latter this was distributed among a much larger group.

The longer-term profile, however, was quite distinct for the upper two fractiles. The top 1 per cent underwent a comparative decline during the first three postwar decades, and a rise from 1980 onward. The 90–99 fractile, by contrast, saw a steady upwards progression from the end of World War II up to 2000. Given the income composition of this group, one can conclude that wages were mostly responsible for this recovery. The fate of the 0–90 fractile is far more dramatic, with the sharp decline in its share of us household income from the mid-1970s amounting to a loss of 12 per cent, to the benefit of the upper groups.

Figure 9 shows the share of the total amount of wages paid to us households for the same three fractiles, with all series normalized to 0 for 1950. Considering only the postwar decades, and abstracting the fact that,

FIGURE 9. *Shares of total household wages received by three fractiles (deviation from 1950), 1918–1999*

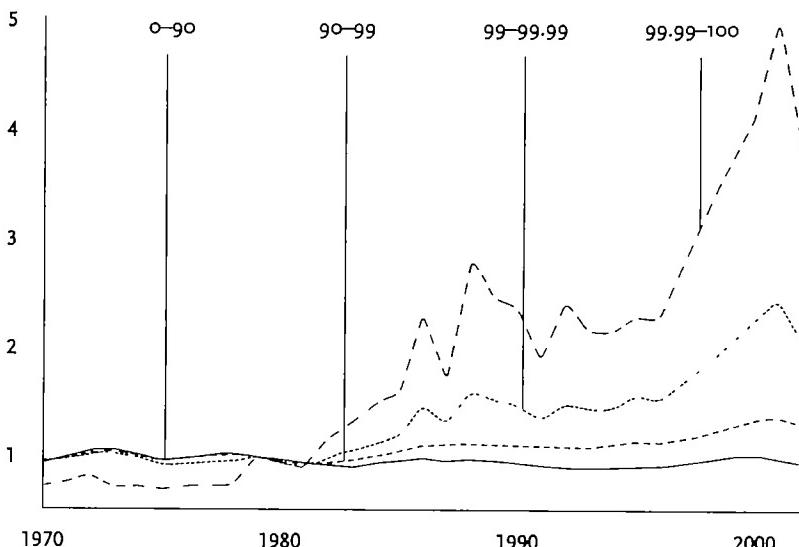


All series have been normalized to 0 for 1950. In 1950, the values were 73.9 per cent for the fractile 0–90; 21.0 per cent for 90–99, and 5.1 per cent for 99–100. Source: Piketty and Saez, 'Income Inequality', table A2.

before 1960, the share of household wages paid to the 90–99 fractile grew slightly at the expense of the other two groups, the most salient feature is the sudden divergence after 1970. The share of wages of the fractile 0–90 fell by 13 percentage points in thirty years—a steady decline, with no break observable in the early 1980s. Correspondingly, the other two fractions increased their share by about 6 per cent each. Obviously, one must again keep in mind that the number of individuals in the top 1 per cent is only a ninth of that in the 90–99 fractile. Their average gain was, therefore, nine times the greater. In line with earlier findings, this underlines the importance of growing wage inequality in the transformation of income patterns since the 1970s. But while this added to the recovery of the share of household income of the upper 1 per cent after 1980, it began significantly later than for the 90–99 fractile.

Real income figures amplify these stark trends. Figure 10 shows average real income, pre-tax, during the period 1970–2002 for the four fractiles 0–90, 90–99, 99–99.99 and 99.99–100, with no overlaps, giving the

FIGURE 10. *Average real income for four fractiles, including capital gains, 1970–2002*



All series are in 2001 dollars and have been normalized to 1 in 1979, series are deflated using the Consumer Price Index. In 1979 the values were: \$27,532 for the fractile 0–90; \$100,579 for 90–99, \$308,290 for 99–99.99; and \$3,387,913 for 99.99–100. Source: Piketty and Saez, 'Income Inequality', table A5.

average income in constant dollars for each fractile, normalized to 1 in 1979. This reveals that the real income of the fractile 0–90, that is 90 per cent of the us population, actually stagnated since 1979, while for the top 0.01 per cent, real income quadrupled. It is unfortunately impossible to use series consistent with the above to discuss the transformation over time of income distribution for the components of the 0–90 fractiles. A comparison with figures from the us Census Bureau, however, would suggest that the main burden of this growing income inequality fell on the lower half of the wage spectrum.

### *Everyone a capitalist?*

What of the diffusion of financial assets that occurred during the last decades of the 20th century? It is well known that the percentage of us households holding stock shares, directly or indirectly, grew from about 32 per cent to 52 per cent between 1989 and 2001. This phenomenon extended to the poorest quintile of us households, although the percentage of shareholders in this layer remained a low 12 per cent in 2001, compared to nearly 90 per cent for the upper decile.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind the limited size of these holdings. For 2001, the average portfolio of shares amounted to \$7,000 for the bottom quintile, while that of the top decile was \$247,700.

Table 3 (overleaf) shows the holdings for each fractile as a percentage of those of the upper decile, 90–100, for the years 1992, 1995, 1998 and 2001. By 2001, there had been a significant concentration of shareholding. The portfolio of the 60–80 quintile amounted to only 11.5 per cent of the top decile's; that of the 80–90 decile, to 26.1 per cent. Another interesting observation is that the concentration of holdings increased for all fractiles between 1992 and 2001. So, in 1992, the portfolio of the second quintile, 20–40, amounted to 8.3 per cent of that of the upper decile; in 2001 it had been reduced to 3.0 per cent; and a similar diminution appears for the other quintiles. (The percentage for the first quintile in 1992 is puzzling.)

The accumulation of wealth within pension funds or other retirement accounts has been widely documented in recent years. As a percentage of the disposable income of us households, these assets have grown from

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<sup>13</sup> Ana Aizcorbe, Arthur Kennickell and Kevin Moore, 'Recent Changes in us Family Finances: Evidence from the 1998 and 2001 Survey of Consumer Finances', *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, vol. 89, 2003, pp. 1–32.

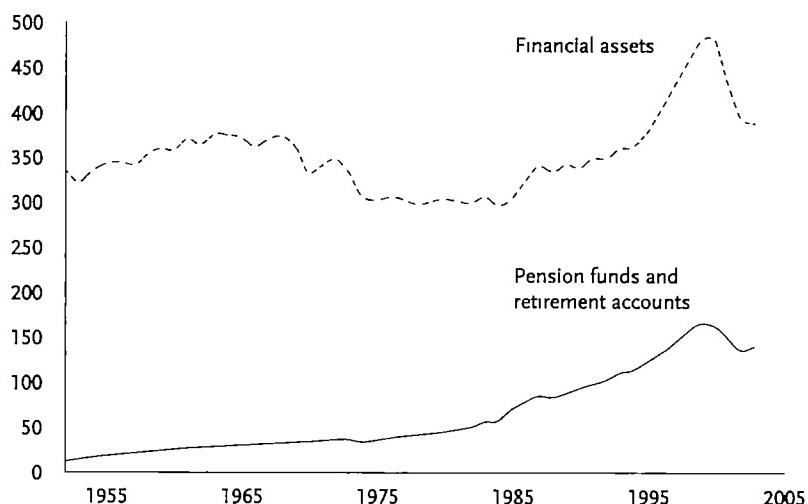
13 per cent in 1952 to over 140 per cent in 2003, with some acceleration from the mid-1980s, as shown in the lower line of Figure II.

TABLE 3. *Median value of family share portfolios*

	1992	1995	1998	2001
All families	22.1	24.4	18.6	13.8
<i>Percentile of income</i>				
0–20	16.8	6.2	3.7	2.8
20–40	8.3	10.5	7.4	3.0
40–60	10.5	10.4	8.9	6.1
60–80	17.2	21.1	13.9	11.5
80–90	29.4	41.7	33.4	26.1
90–100	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Median value of direct and indirect shareholdings divided by the median value of the top decile. Source: Aizcorbe et al, 'Recent Changes in us Family Finances'.

FIGURE II. *Total assets held by households in pension funds and retirement accounts, total financial assets held by households (%), 1952–2003*

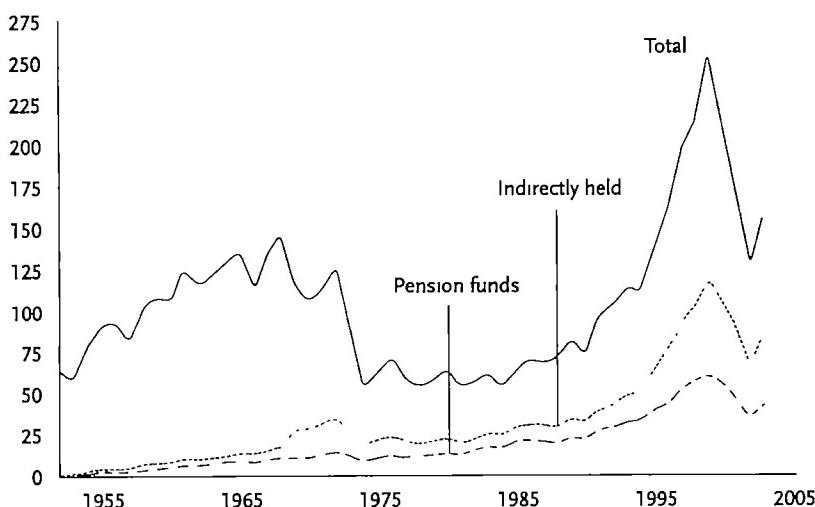


Series are expressed as a percentage of the disposable income of households. Source: Flow of Funds (Federal Reserve).

The upper line in Figure 11 shows the evolution of the total financial assets of households, held directly or indirectly. It is interesting to note that no upward trend is apparent. Instead, the fluctuations reflect those of the stock market—falling during the structural crisis of the 1970s, peaking with the late 1990s bubble, and then going into decline. The centralization of assets in financial institutions, such as pension funds or mutual funds, defines another important trend, also evident in Figure 11. In 2003, the financial assets of us households held within pension funds and retirement accounts represented 36 per cent of their total financial assets, whereas they were negligible after World War II. Besides pensions and retirement accounts, gradually broader fractions of the population held securities indirectly within other funds. In 1980, 5.7 per cent of us households owned mutual funds; by 2003, the percentage was 47.9 per cent.<sup>14</sup>

Figure 12 shows the total amounts of stock shares held by households, directly and indirectly, as a percentage of their disposable income.

FIGURE 12. Total stock shares held by households (%), 1952–2003



Series are expressed as a percentage of the disposable income of households. Shares held in partnerships are not considered here. Pension funds, a subset of indirectly held shares, include both state and private funds. Source: Flow of Funds (Federal Reserve).

<sup>14</sup> Investment Company Institute: [www.financialservicesfacts.org](http://www.financialservicesfacts.org)

The fraction of stock shares held indirectly—that is, within financial institutions—rose steadily from World War II and, in the early 2000s, reached about half of the total. Those held in pension funds amount to around half of all shares indirectly held, or one quarter of the total.

Again, however, as noted for the total financial assets of households, there is no trend in the total amount of stock shares held relative to households' disposable income. The fluctuations observed are merely those of the stock market, with a dramatic devaluation of households' portfolios after the bursting of the late 1990s bubble. The value of stock shares indirectly held by households culminated above 100 per cent of their disposable income in 1999, and then fell to 67 per cent in 2002; in 2003, it stood at 86 per cent.

### *Capital income below the top*

Capital income, including capital gains, accounts for a quite limited share of the total income of most households. As shown in Table 1 above, this share does not reach 6 per cent for the bottom 98 per cent income fractile. The slightly higher level for the very poorest—the 48 million Americans earning under \$20,000—may refer to specific groups of 'poor' retirees. Moving upward toward larger tax returns, capital income (even including capital gains) contributes less than 5 per cent of total income up to the bracket \$75,000–\$100,000, where the figure reaches 5.5 per cent. For the next bracket, \$100,000–\$200,000, capital income (again including capital gains) reaches 8.9 per cent. For all these groups, partnership income remains very small.

Beginning with the bracket \$200,000–\$500,000, the composition of income changes considerably, as shown in Figure 1 above. Capital income and capital gains account for 16.2 per cent of total income. Partnership income leaps to 9.4 per cent. But one must notice that we are now entering into the top 2 per cent of the income hierarchy. Although the frontiers apparent for distinct variables in each data source are not exactly identical, coherent patterns are revealed. Capital income and gains still account for a quite limited fraction of the income of wage-earners that compose, for example, the 90–99 fractile of the income pyramid.

Given the significant amounts of securities accumulated in pension funds and other retirement accounts, and the limited share of capital income

that upper-salaried classes receive, it seems obvious that most of what they do get must come from these sources. It is first important to emphasize that, in spite of the sums accumulated in pension funds and retirement accounts, these assets have, at least to date, contributed only to a limited extent to the income of retired households. This is shown in table 4, which breaks down the income of over-65s by major sources of income: social security, asset income, private and government pension funds, public assistance and other sources. The period covered is 1958–2000.

TABLE 4. *Shares of aggregate income of households aged 65+, 1958–2000 (%)*

Income Source	1958	1967	1976	1980	1988	1990	1998	2000
<i>Social Security</i>	22	26	39	39	38	36	38	38
<i>Asset Income</i>	23	25	18	22	25	25	20	18
<i>Earnings</i>	37	30	23	19	17	18	21	23
<i>Private Pensions</i>	5	5	7	7	8	9	10	9
<i>Govt. Pensions</i>	9	9	6	7	9	9	9	9
<i>Public Assistance</i>	5	3	2	1	1	1	1	1
<i>Other</i>	0	2	5	5	2	2	2	2

Source: Alicia Munnell, James Lee and Kevin Meme, 'An Update on Pension Data', Center for Retirement Research, July 2004

Thus, it must be emphasized that, in 2000, pension funds (government and private) accounted for only 18 per cent of the income of people aged 65 and older. Social Security, at 38 per cent, amounted to twice as much—a proportion that has remained stable since 1976. Predictably, upper-income fractiles benefit more than the rest of the population from the pensions paid by pension funds: instead of the total 18 per cent of income received on average by over-65s, the poorest quintile receives 3 per cent, the 20–40 quintile 7 per cent, the middle quintile 17 per cent, the 60–80 quintile 28 per cent and the top quintile 29 per cent. In other words the proportion never reaches 30 per cent, even for the upper quintile. It is interesting, however, that such pensions account for 17 per cent of the income of the 40–60 quintile. This clearly shows that pension

funds extend the benefit of capital accumulation, income and gains to fractions of the population who, when active, received very little from it.

### *Neoliberalism in historical perspective*

We have discussed elsewhere the question of the overall periodization of US capitalism since the Civil War, with reference to the changing patterns of relations of production and productive forces, to class struggle, to the historical tendencies of the profit rate and technological change, as well as other institutional innovations.<sup>15</sup> In the first instance, two categories of phenomena, or levels of analysis, should be distinguished: on the one hand, the transformation of relations of production, including the institutional forms in which the ownership of the means of production is expressed—family ownership, as opposed to big corporations backed by financial institutions, for example; on the other hand, major class-power configurations, such as the Keynesian compromise or neoliberalism, need to be determined. Successive twenty- or thirty-year periods of decline and rise in the profit rate, in combination with structural crises, define clear phases in the history of capitalism; the world wars have also marked obvious ruptures. Such events interact with the mechanisms outlined above, structuring the contours of a complex historical trajectory.

We may briefly summarize the major features of US capitalism as it emerged from World War II. Following the shock of the Great Depression, the mechanisms of the New Deal had intervened in the very functioning of the capitalist market and monetary institutions. By the end of the War, the labour movement was on the rise; the USSR had not only survived but asserted itself as a major world power. In this context, American ruling elites were constrained to accept a new social compact. The postwar compromise, in line with Keynes's analysis of the main weaknesses of capitalism, 'concentrated' state intervention on macro policy. US capitalists lost a substantial share of their income. This was not due to a sudden fall of the profit rate—quite the contrary: the profitability of capital was exceptionally high after the war. Yet a far greater share of profits (in the

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<sup>15</sup> See, respectively, Duménil and Lévy, 'Periodizing Capitalism. Technology, Institutions, and Relations of Production', in Robert Albritton et al, eds, *Phases of Capitalist Development*, Basingstoke 2001; *Économie marxiste du capitalisme*, Paris 2003; and *Capital Resurgent*, Cambridge, MA 2004.

broad sense of the term: total income minus compensation of labour) now went to the state, through taxation, or remained within corporations for investment. Domestically, the features of this period included control of monetary and financial mechanisms, investment-focused corporate management and a growing system of social protection, while the new international order was defined at Bretton Woods in 1944. The compromise involved a new opening toward the lower-income fractions of the population, and resulted in diminished levels of inequality. The owners of the means of production had not, of course, been eliminated; their income, however, had been reduced and their financial institutions surrounded by a new regulatory framework. The phrase 'financial repression', coined to express this check on the untrammelled dominance of US capitalists and their finance institutions, may overstate the case; 'financial containment' would be closer to the mark.

Different elements of the Keynesian compromise unravelled at different speeds. Wage inequality, reduced during the 1950s, was on the rise from the 1960s. Internationally, the Bretton Woods system had started to unravel with the dollar crisis at the beginning of the 1970s, as currencies began to float and limits to capital mobility were gradually lifted. With the development of euromarkets and eurobanking, a new, deregulated financial system began to take shape. The deepening structural crisis of the 1970s dealt the final blow to the Keynesian compromise as, in the wake of the gradual slide of the profit rate in the postwar era, accumulation and output-growth rates diminished, a large wave of structural unemployment developed, and inflation rates began a cumulative rise. An emblematic moment in the assertion of neoliberalism was Carter's appointment of Paul Volcker to head the Federal Reserve. With the backing of finance capital, Volcker hoisted interest rates to unprecedented levels in what we have called the '1979 coup'—with severe consequences for the core economies and catastrophic effects for the debt-laden countries of the periphery.

It is important to distinguish ends and means in the analysis of neoliberalism. Price stability, or the free international mobility of capital, are means to a single end: the restoration of the income and wealth of the richest classes. The first striking achievement of neoliberalism was the restoration of capital income and capital gains. Various mechanisms have been involved:

1. *The rise of interest rates.* The 1979 Volcker coup meant a sudden rise of real interest rates (nominal interest rates, minus inflation rate). During the 1960s and early 1970s, real long-term rates fluctuated between 2 and 3 per cent; they actually became negative during the 1970s, as the inflation rate was higher than nominal interest rates. From the beginning of the 1980s they leapt to 8 per cent, and later fluctuated around 5 per cent.
2. *Lavish flows of dividends.* During the 1970s, non-financial corporations used, after paying taxes and interest, to distribute about 40 per cent of their remaining profits as dividends. Beginning in the early 1980s, this rose gradually to nearly 100 per cent, a figure that was actually reached during the recession of 2001.
3. *The rise of the stock market.* Stock-market indexes (corrected for inflation) had been halved during the crisis of the 1970s. In the 1980s and 1990s they rose to nearly three times the average late-60s/early-70s level, and nearly six times that of the late 1970s.
4. *New financial mechanisms.* The financial sector developed rapidly during the neoliberal era, with the net worth of US financial corporations (excluding government institutions and pension and mutual funds) growing from 16 per cent of that of non-financial corporations during the 1960s to 22 per cent by the late 1990s. Besides lending, these firms are engaged in a wide range of financial operations: underwriting, managing portfolios (especially those held by pension and mutual funds), transactions on money and financial markets, and so on. Significant profits are distributed as partnership income.

While the rise of wage inequality was not concomitant with neoliberalism—it was, rather, an expression of the gradual unravelling of the Keynesian compromise in its early more egalitarian configuration—neoliberalism served to inflect these trends to the benefit of the elites. For the top 1 per cent, soaring wages, supplemented by stock options, appeared the most straightforward and efficient device to appropriate a growing fraction of the surplus before profits could be distributed along traditional lines. At this level, at what we have called the ‘interface between ownership and management’, owners, boards of directors and top management coexist and interact. Managers—where they are not

originally scions of capitalist families—are transformed into owners by the scale of their remuneration. Owners are still in a position to drive management strategies. If neoliberalism is fundamentally about the reassertion of capitalists' privileges, this 'merger' at the top was a crucial element in the imposition of the new order, which would have been impossible to achieve without the collaboration of top management.

Thus, besides 'capital income' in the strict sense of interest dividends, possibly including capital gains, neoliberal capitalism is characterized by a broader array of incomes linked to the ownership and control of the means of production. These are composed of very high salaries, stock options, capital gains, financial partnership income, interest and dividends.

### *A new class settlement?*

The second major beneficiary of the gradual dissolution of the Keynesian compromise in the US has been the layer of 'upper-salaried classes'. Although the required information is not all available, one can surmise that this comprises a social group falling roughly within the 85–98 fractile, with an annual income between \$75,000 and \$200,000, basically composed of wages before the age of 65, and pension income after. The salaries of this layer, as we have seen, have grown comparatively faster than those of less well-off sectors of the population since the 1950s, a trend that neoliberalism has done nothing to interrupt. Secondly, although the upper-salaried classes have benefited from increased returns on financial investment only to a limited extent—approximately 5 per cent of their total income—while still economically active, the extension of pension funds has been a crucial mechanism in establishing a link between this layer and the capitalist elite, associating them with an interest in the restoration of capital income and the rise of capital gains. In this context, the development of pension funds appears as a key component in forging a broader class alliance in favour of neoliberal restructuring, since these upper-salaried classes do not live from capital income or gains while economically active.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The contradiction is that pension funds can only contribute to the payment of pensions to the extent that they stimulate savings and accumulation. In any instance, it is the work of the active fraction of the population which will contribute to the purchasing power of retirees. The US economy is the living demonstration that pension funds do not necessarily stimulate savings. Individuals are accumulating in their funds, on the one hand, and consuming on the other.

Finally, it is precisely this upper-salaried layer that has played the most central role in the shift towards rising consumption and declining saving trends in the US during the neoliberal era. As Alan Greenspan acknowledged in his January 20, 1999, testimony: 'We have some evidence from recent years that all or most of the decline in the saving rate is accounted for by the upper-income quintile where the capital gains have disproportionately accrued, which suggests that the wealth effect has been real and significant'.<sup>18</sup> Several factors are involved. The shift toward large wages *per se*, given that employment and retirement are guaranteed, which is supposedly the case for these layers, may have been a factor of low savings; as may the loose household credit policy under neoliberalism. This rush to consumption has certainly been a major component in the adherence of these classes to the neoliberal social order.

Nevertheless, the experience of the upper-salaried layers has been quite distinct from that of the top 1 or 2 per cent. Both Figures 3 and 8 show the sudden diminution of income for the top 1 per cent, and its dramatic restoration from the 1980s onward, in contrast to the gradual postwar rise for the 90–99 fractile. As Figure 10 shows, below the top 1 per cent there was no neoliberal miracle. The 90–99 fractile experienced a relatively disappointing rise of purchasing power of approximately 25 per cent in 25 years (note that 'purchasing power' here refers to income; actual purchases are something else). Distinct mechanisms are clearly at stake here for these two layers. Yet, as Figure 8 also shows, both sets of gains were achieved at the price of an outstanding comparative loss for the great mass of wage-earners. If their material benefits from the late 1970s onward have been inferior to those of big capital, the support of the upper-salaried classes has nevertheless been a crucial component of the assertion of the neoliberal order.

A detailed discussion of the mechanisms through which this 'neoliberal covenant' between capital and upper wage-earners was sealed lies beyond the scope of this paper. Such an analysis would have to take into consideration a complex range of economic factors and social processes: the dollar crisis, and unravelling of the Bretton Woods order; the rise of transnational corporations seeking international deregulation; the structural crisis of the US economy in the 1970s; inflation; the 'decline' of US

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<sup>18</sup> See also Dean Maki and Michael Palumbo, 'Disentangling the Wealth Effect: A Cohort Analysis of Household Saving in the 1990s', Finance and Economics Discussion Series, no 2001–21, Federal Reserve, Washington.

hegemony after Vietnam, and so on. Ideologically, the sense of economic crisis and hegemonic decay did much to justify Volcker's interest-rate coup. US nationalism ('America is back!') played an important role in legitimating the Reagan Administration's onslaught on the mass of US wage-earners. Under Clinton, the 'new economy' boom of the second half of the 1990s inexorably drove the process forward.

The outcome was the striking of a new social compact, marking a thorough break with the New Deal coalition. It was this neoliberal compromise which ensured that the reassertion of the power and privileges of the capitalist elite, themselves a tiny minority, would be compatible with the preservation of US class democracy—a political system which allows for the expression of divergent views among the ruling elites, as well as the limited articulation of the interests of other classes. Ruling-class control over the mass media and electoral abstention by large sections of the population are crucial elements for the maintenance of this system. Nevertheless, US capital still requires an alliance with other class fractions to push through the neoliberal programme within its framework.

### *Two-tier capitalism?*

An analysis of US capital ownership and income trends would thus refute any notion of a society in which 'share-owning workers' reap the rewards of capitalist owners, and the 'working rich' are rewarded for their toil. For the ultra-rich, very high salaries, supplemented by stock options which reached astronomical proportions during the neoliberal decades, have functioned not as a commensurate reward for toil but as a privileged means of appropriating the social surplus. In global terms, these outstanding incomes can be unambiguously linked to the ownership of capital. Similarly, 'partnership income' largely refers to purely capitalist types of financial activities. Huge amounts of capital are invested there, its ownership concentrated in the hands of a tiny minority of high-income households. In addition, 'partnerships' allow for the transformation of capital income into capital gains, taxed at a much lower rate.

The diffusion of this bonanza remains quite limited. Below the top 1 or 2 per cent of the income pyramid, capital income and capital gains amount to a very small percentage of the total income of wage-earners, at least while they are still economically active. Even after retirement, pension-fund earnings only provide a moderate share of total income—

less than 30 per cent, for the top quintile; barely a sixth of total income for the third quintile. For 65s and over, the total sum of pensions paid by both government and private pension funds is actually surpassed by the amount of direct capital income in the us today, itself largely concentrated at the top of the pyramid.

The above investigation would suggest a rather more limited development of capital ownership under neoliberalism, one that leaves the overall contours of modern capitalist class relations little changed. Two 'levels' of capital ownership can now be distinguished:

1. Capital ownership by a capitalist class. This form of ownership retains all the characteristics that have persisted since the separation of ownership and management at the turn of the 20th century. Owners are fundamentally separated from corporations. Their property can be characterized as financial. The power of these classes is expressed through 'their' financial institutions, which would include mutual or pension funds; but what is at issue here is not the pensions that these upper categories may receive, but the funds themselves as a source of income and power, both through their management and through the pressure they can exert on corporations for increased profitability.
2. The access given to broader salaried classes, primarily through pension funds, to a quite distinct form of passive and subordinate ownership—but in which the ownership of capital is still at issue. This is the configuration of what we call 'two-tier capitalism'.

These relations, however, are historical and dynamic. The upper fractions of the salaried classes, involved in the second tier, are not just dominated mestizos in this capitalist reproduction process, but also actors. The broad social compromise imposed by the large masses of workers after World War II—in the context of the weakness of the capitalist order and the growing power of Soviet-style socialism—was gradually eroded by rising wage inequality (a polarization that is also the expression of new hierarchical patterns in the division of labour, whose analysis lies beyond the limits of this paper). In the context of the social and economic conditions obtaining in the 1970s, the capitalist class was able to use this widening polarization among wage-earners to its own advantage and, after decades of continuous effort, to restore its prerogatives

within neoliberalism. The Keynesian compromise yielded to the new neoliberal compact, a shift from the lower strata of the income pyramid toward the top.

In the adherence of upper-salaried classes to the neoliberal creed, pension funds played a crucial role. In the longer term, did these classes make the wrong choice? As we have seen, neoliberalism has not delivered much in real purchasing power to this layer. High interest rates, and the stock-market and housing bubbles, created the illusion of an autonomous and automatic prosperity. But what is the future of the stock market when all profits are already distributed as dividends, and returns on stocks are still very low? What is the future of an economy which paradoxically lost its capability to save (when pension funds were supposed to stimulate savings), and has built itself on the accumulation of external disequilibria?



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## REVIEWS

Michael Mann, *Fascists*

Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2004, £15.99, paperback  
429 pp, 0 521 53855 6

Robert Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*

Alfred Knopf: New York 2004, \$26, hardback  
321 pp, 1 4000 4094 9

DYLAN RILEY

### ENIGMAS OF FASCISM

Was fascism a revolutionary or a counter-revolutionary phenomenon? This question has always been the central dividing-line in the literature about it. If fascism was revolutionary, then it belongs with communism as a variant of totalitarian politics, and offers yet another example of the disasters to which twentieth-century revolutions led—Hitler and Stalin as twin monsters of the age. If, on the other hand, fascism was counter-revolutionary, then its place in European history looks quite different. Rather than standing as a warning against the dangers of revolutionary ideology, its success in defeating socialism can be seen as laying the groundwork for the spread of liberal-democratic capitalism thereafter, with the disappearance of any radical threat to the bourgeois order in post-war Germany and Italy, or post-Franco Spain. Interpretations of fascism are thus intimately bound up with alternative readings of the history of the twentieth century as a whole.

The appearance of two new books on the subject, by Michael Mann and Robert Paxton, each in their own way of high quality, illustrates this pattern vividly once again. Mann, the world's most prolific historical sociologist, is best known for his magisterial *Sources of Social Power*, which runs (so far) from neolithic times to the Belle Epoque. He has recently offered a critical assessment of the Bush Administration's foreign policy, *Incoherent Empire*.

Paxton is one of the rare living historians to have demonstrably altered a country's understanding of itself, with his classic work *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order* (1972) which showed not only the breadth of social support for Pétain's regime, but the extent to which it actively pursued a partnership with the Third Reich, rather than simply being forced to do its will. The two writers could hardly have reached more opposite conclusions. Mann insists that fascists were a revolutionary force possessing a powerful ideology, a coherent social base and a distinctive set of goals that would ultimately have created a regime incompatible with capitalism. Paxton argues that, on the contrary, fascism was a counter-revolutionary movement, whose medley of notions was intrinsically opportunistic; which came to power only through an alliance with terrified conservatives; and proved incapable of producing stable or coherent political institutions. What are the relative merits of each approach?

Mann's *Fascists* is an impressive book by any standards. It deals skilfully and fair-mindedly with a vast empirical literature, while sure-footedly—if sometimes selectively—picking its way through a treacherous jungle of competing theoretical models. Through all of this Mann crafts an original and well-documented central argument. Many of his trademark strengths as a sociologist are powerfully on display. He is excellent on the religious and regional dimensions of his problem and, while forcefully making his own case, is careful to consider the relative merits of what he takes to be the most significant alternatives. His book is organized into two parts. The first asks why 'over half, but not all, of the relatively advanced part of the world and of Europe' turned in a right-wing authoritarian direction after the First World War, and then why, within this zone, fascism arose as a subset of a wider drift. Mann conceptualizes the right-wing authoritarianism of the time as a continuum from mild to extreme variants, distinguishing four regime types within it, according to the relative powers enjoyed by the executive and legislative branches of the state, and the degree of popular integration into politics. While more articulated than most other discussions of interwar authoritarianism, this classification follows a basic logic common to much work on the subject, which is concerned to distinguish between the various regimes of the right in Southern and Eastern Europe that were often sharply opposed to their own local fascist parties, and fascist regimes proper.

More distinctive is the explanation Mann offers for the rise of right-wing authoritarianism and the—more localized—emergence of fascism, which he seeks to show can only be fully understood in terms of his 'IEMP' model of the four sources of social power: ideological, economic, military and political. By 1919, the strains of war, economic dislocation and the arrival of mass politics had destabilized to a greater or lesser extent all European regimes. How the ensuing crisis was resolved, he argues, depended on two factors:

the nature of pre-existing political arrangements and the extent of long-term economic development. In 'dual' states—that is, where the executive was largely independent of the legislature, or there was no party alternation—conservatives, fearing mass political participation as a threat to the traditional 'neutrality' of the state, were tempted to fall back on strong-arm rule by the executive. In states where parliaments were dominant before the war, the crisis took the form of intensified party competition. The result was a division of the continent between a democratic North and West, and an authoritarian Centre, South and East.

After laying out this larger geopolitical setting, in the second and much longer part of his book Mann proceeds to six case studies of fascist movements: in Italy, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania and Spain. Here Mann sharply narrows his focus. Ideological power becomes the central mechanism for explaining the rise of fascism *within* the authoritarian zone. In essence, Mann argues that fascist ideology promised a 'transcendence' of social conflict that had a magnetic appeal for a 'nation-statist' core constituency that lay at a tangent to the major protagonists of industrial class conflict. This claim entails two equally important negative arguments. The first is that the social base of mass fascism was structurally classless, not simply because it included recruits from virtually all social strata, but above all because it pre-eminently featured groups *outside* the main class forces of a capitalist society—industrialists and financiers on one side, organized labour on the other. The second is that fascism was not a response to any significant threat from the left. Fascism was thus neither a counter-revolution, nor was it rooted in basic class antagonisms. Mann provides a wealth of fascinating detail on the movements it generated. But he makes little attempt here to provide an account of the regimes it installed, a task he defers to subsequent work. Essentially, his book stops short of the threshold of rule.

Paxton's *Anatomy of Fascism* offers an almost complete, formal and substantive, contrast to Mann's *Fascists*. Although about half the length of Mann's work, it covers a much wider historical span, running from the earliest origins to the final downfall of the two major European fascisms in Germany and Italy, with significant side-lights on lesser movements elsewhere. Like Mann, Paxton has mastered an extraordinary range of materials, and brought them into a highly lucid and manageable compass. But rather than a series of side-by-side case studies, Paxton has constructed an elegant analytic narrative, no less comparative, but with a quite distinct focus, that yields a central argument sharply at odds with Mann's. The differences begin with Paxton's central question. The *Anatomy of Fascism* asks: 'Why did [fascist] movements of similar inspiration have such different outcomes in different societies?'—that is, success in Italy and Germany, compared with a much more chequered or frustrated record elsewhere. It is no surprise,

given his disciplinary background, that *time* is at the centre of Paxton's study in a way that it is not for Mann. But less usually for a historian, Paxton's research design is sculpted conceptually in a particularly pointed and lucid way. The core of his analysis carefully tracks Italian and German fascism through five distinct stages: the creation of the movements, their rooting in the political system, their seizure of power, their exercise of power, and their trajectory as regimes.

Paxton starts by identifying four broad preconditions that set the stage for what he calls the 'epoch' of fascism: the experience of the First World War, the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution, the rise of mass socialist parties, and the emergence of a repertoire of cultural themes exalting the values of race, community or nation over those of the individual and of reason. Turning to an analysis of the varying extent to which fascist movements became effective players in their respective political systems, he deftly sketches Italian and German success in inserting themselves into a 'diagonal' class conflict pitting urban (and in the Italian case also rural) socialists against conservative small and medium-sized farmers, as against French failure to do so. Here his general argument is that to become a significant political force, fascist movements had to establish an alliance between small and medium-sized farmers and some urban elements, in the context of a weakly institutionalized liberal democracy.

Paxton's third stage focuses more narrowly on Italy and Germany, and asks how fascists, once they had taken root in the political system, actually came to power within it. For in neither did they gain control of the state by themselves, either by electoral victory or by armed coup. Rather they were brought into government by a conservative establishment. 'Mussolini and Hitler were invited to take office as head of government by a head of state in the legitimate exercise of his official functions, on the advice of civilian and military counsellors'. By contrast, in Romania and Austria, where mass fascist movements also developed, they were crushed or brought to heel by conservatives. Paxton makes it clear that the crucial question was thus: under what conditions were conservatives willing to invite mass fascist parties into power? His answer is unambiguous. Only where they felt threatened by a major challenge from the socialist left, and insufficiently confident of using the traditional repressive apparatuses of the state, was this likely to happen.

Paxton then moves to consider the tensions within fascist systems of rule, once the movements were ensconced in power. Three central conflicts characterized the Italian and German regimes, strains between fascists and conservatives, between leader and party, and between party and state. In Berlin, he argues, the first was rapidly settled in favour of the fascists, but in Rome ultimately in that of the conservatives, in part because of the continuing role of the Italian monarchy. The second ended with far more

power in the hands of the leader in Germany than in Italy. The upshot of the third tilted more towards the state in Italy, and to the party in Germany. Paxton ends his comparison by looking at the dynamic of the two regimes. He concludes that they became truly radicalized only when wars of conquest opened up new territories in which the party, freed from the restraints of the domestic state, gained something like total control on the ground—in Ethiopia, Poland and the captured areas of the Soviet Union. In doing so, they revealed their own limits: millions were murdered at their hands, but no coherent administrations were created.

How do the two overall approaches of Mann and Paxton, offering such different judgements of the ideological cogency, sociological basis, and political regimes of fascism, compare? Mann's insistence on the decisive importance of fascist ideology places him close to George Mosse and Zeev Sternhell, who have argued that fascism possessed a doctrinal coherence no less defensible than that of the other great 'isms', particularly socialism. But his way of describing it is in one respect somewhat more down-to-earth. 'Fascism', he writes, 'is the pursuit of a transcendent and cleansing nation-statism through paramilitarism'. On the face of it, this formula seems to combine an ideology (nation-statism) with a tactic (paramilitarism), but Mann regards the latter as also a 'value'. There can be no quarrel with the tactical part of such a definition. Classic fascism invented the party militia as a distinctive form of political organization, and this gave it an enormous advantage in relation to all of its competitors. It is a merit of Mann's to see this more clearly than many sociologists have done.

But the major weight of Mann's definition falls on ideological beliefs in a more traditional sense. 'To understand fascism', he declares, 'I adopt a methodology of taking fascists' values seriously'. Few authors have dwelt so insistently on the power of fascist ideology. 'Fascism', we are told, 'was a movement of high ideals, able to *persuade* a substantial part of two generations of young men that it could bring about a more harmonious social order'. A persistent failure of Marxist approaches to fascism, Mann thinks, has been an inability to appreciate the attractive force of these ideals, leading to the blind alley of a class analysis that is doomed to fail as an *interpretative* sociology of fascism. Such analysts view fascism 'from outside', a perspective that would have made little sense to fascists, who dismissed class theories as they did every other aspect of Marxism. For Mann, the linchpin of their characteristic outlook was the idea of transcendence. 'Fascist nation-statism', as he puts it, 'would be able to "transcend" social conflict, first repressing those who fomented strife—and then incorporating classes and other interest groups into state corporatist institutions'. This formulation seems to be mostly adapted from *Italian* fascist doctrine of the late twenties and early thirties, although the intellectual sources here are not carefully explained. As Mann

himself admits, there is very little Nazi doctrine that could be interpreted as class transcendence: 'the shape of the future Reich was left to Hitler, and he was not too specific'.

How convincing is this account of fascist ideology? It suffers from two weaknesses. The first is simply that in so far as 'class transcendence' played any role in the outlook of black- or brownshirts, it was not class as a sociological fact, but the liberal way of institutionalizing it, that fascism sought to transcend. Italian doctrines, always more articulated than German, were quite explicit about this. It was Giuseppe Bottai, one of the regime's leading theorists, who made the point most clearly. In a collection of essays published in 1928, he accepted that conflict among economic interests was a normal and healthy process. The problem was to make sure that it did not damage or threaten the state. 'When we say that in Italy there is class collaboration rather than class struggle', wrote Bottai, 'we certainly do not want to say that the interests that divide individuals and categories do not exist. Corporativism is a conception that is realistic enough not to fall into such delusions.' But quite apart from this, there is also a serious chronological difficulty in Mann's account. Before the late twenties and early thirties, there is little enough that is relevant for his case to draw on even in Italy. It is hard to escape the conclusion that much of fascist doctrine was an after the fact and arbitrary affair. This is not to say that fascist ideology was of no significance. Mann is undoubtedly right to emphasize the peculiar fusion of a cult of violence with flamboyant symbology as a hypnotic element in fascism. What he fails to address is the critical issue of the typical relationship between 'values' and action, theory and practice, in fascist movements.

Paxton is much more sceptical of fascist claims to doctrinal coherence than Mann. The part that programmes and doctrine play in fascism is, he writes, 'fundamentally unlike the role they play in conservatism, liberalism, and socialism'. For fascism made no appeal to ascertainable or universal truths, indeed frequently scorning the very notion of them. What it relied on instead was emotional mobilization behind the charisma of its leaders, and the call to destiny of the race or nation. 'The rightness of fascism does not depend on the truth of any of the propositions advanced in its name', he writes. Rather than trying to reconstruct a coherent programmatic outlook from its contradictory assertions, Paxton argues, it makes more sense to plot fascism against the changing structure of political opportunities and social forces it encountered. Not that it was ever a purely pragmatic phenomenon. A drive to national and social domination was intrinsic to it, from beginning to end. But no philosophical structure of significance issued from fascism, whose ideology never received 'intellectual underpinnings by any system builder, like Marx, or by any major critical intelligence, like Mill, Burke, or Tocqueville'.

Paxton's deflation of the potency of fascist doctrine as a set of lofty goals and persuasive beliefs is an effective antidote to Mann's idealizations of them. Sternhell and others have, of course, sought to construct impressive intellectual pedigrees for fascist ideology. But these tend to rest on forced extrapolations from assorted forerunners, from Gobineau to Nietzsche, of an earlier epoch. Once in power, fascism did attract at least two gifted thinkers who offered legitimations of it, Giovanni Gentile and Carl Schmitt. But in each case, adherence was *ex post facto*. Neither had much influence on the regimes they served. On the other hand, this absence of systematic theory, in contrast with other ideological systems, was more a symptom than a definition of the real difference between fascism and its rivals. That lay in the fact that fascism was, as Paxton justly notes, a radically *non-programmatic* style of political thinking. Liberalism, socialism and conservatism are in principle all based on cognitively assessable claims about the present state of the world and its future possibilities. With them it is natural to speak of a relationship between means and ends, tactics or strategy and the goals at which these aim.

Fascist ideology did not possess this structure. It was rather an immanent form of political 'thinking', in which tactics—above all violence—acted as placeholders for values, instead of stepping-stones within an overarching, positive political project (like Mann's 'organic nation-statism'). As Gentile put it, fascism 'is not a philosophy that thinks itself, but rather a philosophy that acts itself, and therefore a philosophy that announces and affirms itself not with formulae, but with action'. Unlike socialism, fascism did not claim to convert objective historical possibilities into a political programme. It took action itself as the immediate realization of its doctrine. It follows that an interpretative sociology which imputes fascist actions to a set of overarching goals—'moral absolutes', as Mann describes them—is liable to miss much in the character of fascist subjectivity itself.

What of the social bases of fascism? Mann's most original claim is to have located a distinctive core constituency for it, across all the cases he has studied, among young highly educated men, public employees, and economic sectors linked to the state. These groups, he contends, constituted the natural carriers of fascist ideology, because 'from their slightly removed vantage point they viewed class struggle with distaste, favouring a movement claiming to transcend class struggle'. On the first score, there can be little doubt of the magnitude of Mann's empirical achievement. Not even the most ambitious work within the field of comparative fascism has attempted to produce systematic cross-national evidence on fascist party and militia membership across six countries. His book will be a gold mine for further work in the field for years to come. To say this is not to assent to every conclusion he derives from his own findings. A number of caveats are in

order here. One is simply that for Mann's thesis to hold, he must demonstrate that what he terms 'nation-statist' core groups were over-represented in fascist parties, *in relation to other political parties*. Does he show this? To assemble reliable evidence for fascist parties across such a range of cases was difficult enough; to muster comparable data for other parties might be thought nearly impossible, yet Mann comes very close to doing so. The results, however, do not seem to bear out his principal claim particularly well. At the very least one should expect public employees to be considerably over-represented in the ranks of fascist as opposed to other parties. But the Italian evidence shows that the Catholic Partito Popolare had a higher percentage of them than Mussolini could command. German data indicate that the Nazis had proportionately more party members among state employees than the parties of the left, but also make it clear that non-Nazi parties of the right all had higher percentages of public employees than the Nazis in the late twenties. In Hungary, Arrow Cross deputies elected in 1939 were much less likely to be public servants than those on the government bench. The upshot of these findings is, at the very least, ambiguous. They do not seem to show that the key cadres of fascism were outstandingly 'nation-statist'; they point rather to a more modest conclusion, that parties of the right in general did well among state-linked constituencies.

If Mann's positive argument is thus shakier than it looks, what of his negative claim that fascism had little to do with class? Since he maintains that its nation-statist core constituency had a 'distaste' for class struggle, he seems called upon to show not only that fascists were never recruited from any conventional positions in the class structure, but also that they were reluctant to engage in struggles against other classes. However, apart from a very good discussion of Italian agrarian conflicts, class struggles—indeed struggles of any kind—play very little role in Mann's book, save in the case of Spain, which he excludes from those countries that generated mass fascism. Another way of making the same point is simply to ask: what were the fascist paramilitaries *doing*? Here the answer is inescapable: they were fighting socialists and communists and the forms of class organization that these parties had constructed. Mann is of course correct to point out that violence possessed a symbolic as well as instrumental value for the fascists. But the plain fact is that the main activity of their squads was to destroy class-based organizations of the labour movement. It seems a little odd to argue then that fascists viewed the class struggle with distaste; they engaged in it with violent enthusiasm.

Another difficulty with Mann's argument is that, again with the exception of Spain, it in practice restricts consideration of class structure to urban industrial groups. Surprisingly, the importance of agrarian class structures is nowhere dealt with systematically in *Fascists*. Yet rural strata have played a

prominent part in much of the best Marxist work on fascism since Gramsci, and class struggles in the countryside were decisive in the germination of fascism, as Paxton emphasizes. Landholders large and small were a significant component of Italian and German, as well as of Austrian, fascism. In Hungary and Romania, on the other hand, fascist movements penetrated the industrial working class to an extent they never did farther west, but failed to attract significant support from big landholders. Mann suggests that proletarian support for the Arrow Cross and Iron Guard can be related to the role of the state in industrial development in these two countries, making the working class part of the nation-statist core. But was the state less involved in Italian and German economic development? This seems implausible.

But the brunt of Mann's case lies elsewhere. For Hungary and Romania occupy a crucial position in his overall theory of fascism. Here, after all, appears the decisive evidence against Marxist or other class-based explanations of it, since not only was there no threat from the left in either country, but labour itself freely enrolled in the cause of nation-state 'transcendence'. In this sense, the Arrow Cross and Legion of the Archangel Michael are the *pièce de résistance* of his whole empirical—and theoretical—argument. Here, however, his essentially static comparative approach reveals its shortcomings. For what it ignores is the temporal interconnexion between the different cases it offers up for inspection. The fascist movements in Hungary and Romania took off only after Nazism had come to power in Germany, and the influence and prestige of Hitler's regime radiated throughout Eastern Europe. Because they arose well after the destruction or crippling of socialist movements in their respective countries, they could—as Mann himself notes—operate as a surrogate for labour protest, rather than a front line of defence against it, under conservative authoritarian regimes that allowed little or no space for the political left. But just because they did *not* fulfil the classic historical function of fascism, they never achieved power, for the dominant social order had no real need for them. So, as one might expect, neither the Arrow Cross nor the Iron Guard developed any paramilitary organization of much significance. At best, the Second World War allowed the latter to nest for a few months within the Antonescu dictatorship, before being crushed by it; and the former to serve as German proxies of the last hour, before the Red Army took Budapest. In effect, the Hungarian and Romanian cases cannot bear the intellectual weight Mann puts on them. Their very departure from the Italo-German norm illustrates rather than disproves the class logic Mann wants to refute.

Paxton makes no such error. Without foregrounding the issue of the social base of fascism, he provides a strikingly different picture of its rationale. In both Italy and Germany, he argues, alliances between urban and rural property-holders were the key to the ability of fascist movements to 'take root'

in the political system. Where either one of these elements—radicalized right-wing urban strata, or a terrified landholding class—were missing, fascism failed to take hold. At no point does Paxton provide the kind of systematic data in which Mann's book is so rich, but his focus on the intersection of rural and urban class conflict provides a more satisfactory framework for understanding the dynamics of ascending fascism in the two European societies where it triumphed—as well as the reasons for its failure in interwar France—than a vague and over-extended notion of nation-statism.

But the most fundamental difference in the propositions of the two books is the role of a revolutionary threat from the left. This is foregrounded in Paxton's explanation of the rise of fascism in the countries where it was eventually successful. 'It is essential', he writes, 'to recall how real the possibility of communist revolution seemed in Italy in 1921'. Likewise, he insists that Hitler's victory in 1933 can only be understood against the background of the expanding Communist vote in Germany in the early thirties. This contrasts very sharply with Mann's dismissal of the Red threat as an objectively significant variable (even if here and there the possessing classes over-reacted to it). For Paxton, by contrast, it was this danger that determined acceptance of fascism into power from above by conservative forces. Where it was absent, paramilitary attempts to seize power by fascists from below were invariably crushed, not just in Europe but elsewhere too—he cites Vargas's repression of the green-shirts in Brazil, and could have added similar failures in Japan. Even after the Nazi conquest of most of Europe, Hitler himself was no more trustful of local fascist enthusiasts than were other authoritarians of the period, since there was little need for them. Only in Croatia, not included in Mann's otherwise comprehensive coverage, did Berlin permit the unleashing of a fully fledged native fascism.

Last but not least, how do the two works match up as portraits of fascist regimes? There is a sense in which the question is unfair, since Mann does not attempt to move systematically beyond them as movements, promising treatment of their performance in power in a subsequent volume. But since this, he explains, will be concerned with a general taxonomy of modern ethnic cleansing, it is not clear how far it will in this sense complement *Fascists*. More importantly, however, Mann appears to doubt whether any overall analysis of fascism in power is actually possible, on the grounds that 'an explanation of fascist regimes would be largely confined to two cases. Comparative analysis cannot deal with such small numbers'. This seems perverse. Since Germany and Italy were the only two cases of the passage of fascist movements to fascist regimes, isn't their disciplined *contrast* with other cases within the authoritarian half of Europe, and particularly other cases with mass fascism that *did not* produce fascist regimes, likely to yield important results? Mann's way of conceptualizing his problem blocks him

from posing the question of when and why mass fascist movements were able to achieve state power. It is striking how little treatment either the March on Rome, or the Nazi *Machtergreifung* receive in Mann's book. The reason for this absence is that explaining fascist movements and explaining fascist regimes are separate historical issues—four out of six of Mann's cases were, after all, movements existing within regimes that on his own account were corporatist, not fascist. The fact is that whatever the social composition of these movements, it was only when traditional power-holders were willing to give them office that regimes resulted. Paradoxically, then, while Mann provides an unprecedented wealth of material on fascists, he tells us surprisingly little about fascism.

One of the reasons for this may lie in his initial postulate that fascism was a revolutionary phenomenon, from which he deduces that had fascist regimes been able to develop in their pure form, they would have established a distinctive type of post-capitalist society. This claim leads to a peculiar gap in the book, in which the actual workings of these regimes have only a marginal place in his analysis. Since he treats fascism essentially as a *movement* driven by ideological goals, Mann can skirt the pragmatic realities of its rule. In one of the strangest passages of the book he writes: 'In discussing fascism, the most extreme of the authoritarian family, I am discussing less actual regimes than the future regimes envisaged by the larger fascist movements'. Such an approach makes it impossible to identify fascism as a concrete set of political institutions. The difficulty is clearest in Mann's attempt to contrast fascism with other types of authoritarian regime, which yields such impenetrable formulations as this: 'fascism provided a discontinuity, reversing the flow of power by adding a "bottom-up" mass movement centred on paramilitarism and electoralism, while also increasing coercive powers from the top'. What is perhaps most striking in this vague convolution is the absence of any reference to the party-state complex characteristic of the classic fascist regimes.

What lies behind this surprising failure of conceptualization in a sociologist of Mann's stature? One answer may lie in his commitment to treating fascism as a revolutionary force inspired by transcendent ideological goals. Since fascist regimes—with their hybrid states, originating compromises with conservative elites, and often chaotic arrangements—clearly did not establish new social orders, they sit rather uneasily with this vision. There could also be a disciplinary element at work. Fascist regimes are difficult to grasp within the normal categories of political sociology, because they are not best understood as a fixed set of institutions, but were rather shifting congeries, rife with competing power-centres and ad hoc compromises, in which stable patterns of interaction are very hard to discern.

Paxton's book brings this home with great force. In two exemplary chapters, he traces the ways in which power was variably distributed and exercised under Mussolini and Hitler, examining four distinct agencies: leader, party, state and 'civil society' (often wrongly imagined to have been extinguished). One of the greatest strengths of the resulting account is its demonstration of how important periodization is in any comparison of the Italian and German regimes. Contrary to popular stereotypes, Paxton shows that in its early stages (up to 1924), Italian fascism was *more* violent than its German counterpart, just as the PNF was initially in a stronger position vis-à-vis Mussolini than the NSDAP with respect to Hitler. Later, these relationships were reversed, as the Duce consolidated his power and increasingly tended to subordinate party to state—relying on the traditional bureaucracy for his (very efficient) police repression, rather than on a specially created apparatus run by the party as in Germany. Along the way, Paxton offers a vivid portrait of the contrasting styles of the two dictators in the thirties: 'while Mussolini toiled long hours at his desk, Hitler continued to indulge in the lazy bohemian dilettantism of his art-student days', shunning ministers, often unavailable to aides, ignoring urgent affairs of state, sunk in personal whims and daydreams.

Was there then any common constellation of fascist institutions? Paxton offers instead an arresting image: 'fascist regimes functioned like an epoxy: an amalgam of two very different agents, fascist dynamism and conservative order, bonded by shared enmity toward liberalism and the Left, and a shared willingness to stop at nothing to destroy their common enemies'. The suggestion of an endemic institutional shapelessness is reinforced by Paxton's analysis of the final radicalization of each regime. For it was precisely in this phase, amidst all-out continental war, when party bosses controlled significant territory, and one might have expected some less composite forms of rule to crystallize, that disorder was most displayed. 'The fragmented Nazi administrative system', Paxton writes, 'left the radicals unaccountable, and able to enact their darkest impulses. The Führer, standing above and outside the state, was ready to reward initiative in the jungle of Nazi administration of the eastern occupied territories'.

The Final Solution itself was, as Paxton shows, in part the result of an uncoordinated set of population expulsions carried out by party satraps in the East. Little could be further from the image of a consistent ideology implemented by a single-minded bureaucratic machine. Hans Mommsen thought Nazism had an 'inherent tendency toward self-destruction', and it was no accident that 'pure' fascist regimes were never institutionalized. The radically anti-programmatic character of fascist ideology militated against that. The epoxy was a pact of domination, not a constitution—Hitler was so indifferent to the formalities of the latter that he never even bothered to rescind the charter of the Weimar Republic.

While Paxton's *Anatomy* provides an admirable overview of the respective trajectories of Italian and German fascism, one fundamental dimension of the 'epoch of fascism' is nevertheless missing from it, as it is also from Mann's *Fascists*. There is no discussion in either work of imperialism. Yet mass industrial warfare was at once a decisive condition and consequence of fascist movements and regimes. As Paxton writes, 'War played a circular role in fascist regimes. Early fascist movements were rooted in an exaltation of violence sharpened by World War I, and war-making proved essential to the cohesion, discipline, and explosive energy of fascist regimes'. But neither he nor Mann explains where early twentieth-century war came from. Mann has tackled the origins of the Great War in the second volume of his *Sources of Social Power*, while Paxton has shown how crucial considerations of overseas empire were to the calculus of power in Vichy France. But, although Paxton rightly stresses the location of fascism in the defeated or frustrated powers of 1918, the overall context of inter-state competition—obviously as fundamental in the outbreak of the Second World War as the First—plays little role in either author's explanation of fascism.

This failing has a common effect on the conclusion of both books. For, after so many differences, they end in complete agreement that anything like historic fascism is impossible in the advanced capitalist world today, because of the basic solidity of liberal democracy in this region. Each then looks outside the capitalist core in search of the closest analogies to interwar fascism. If Latin America, the former Soviet bloc, Central or Southern Asia appear to offer the most favourable terrain for any future fascism, both Mann and Paxton take a measured and sceptical view of its chances of revival even there. These judgements are persuasive enough. But neither writer quite explains why it should be so, for both fail—at any rate here—to register the fundamental geopolitical differences between the contemporary period and the fascist epoch. Historical fascism arose in an age of imperialism and revolution, in which capital and the nation-state were symbiotic structures; the fragmentation of the world market after 1914, amidst a general turn toward protectionism, autarky and militarism, paved the way not only for extreme forms of violent nationalism but also the Great Depression.

But as often pointed out in the pages of this journal, most recently by Giovanni Arrighi, since 1945 the basic political economy of the capitalist world has differed profoundly from that of the interwar period. Market integration and monocentric empire, rather than autarky and plural imperialisms, now characterize the advanced capitalist zone. There is no contemporary counterpart to the armaments race between competing capitalist powers, or pressure to incorporate restive masses through extreme nationalism, of the first half of the twentieth century. What about the semi-periphery, which both Mann and Paxton identify as the most likely breeding-grounds for new

forms of fascism? In these regions, especially the Indian subcontinent, a situation of roughly balanced nation-states and geopolitical competition suggests some analogies to the thirties. What is missing, however, is any threat from a radicalized working class or peasantry. In India the BJP rose to power instead through a political vacuum created by the erosion of Congress, in the context of a global triumph of neoliberalism. In the end the story is perhaps simpler than either Paxton or Mann would lead us to believe. For it is the sway of the United States in both the capitalist core and the semi-periphery that has removed any proximate possibility of a return of fascism, both by eliminating the threat of a society beyond capital, and by re-organizing relations among the capitalist powers themselves on strictly pacific lines. How long the *Pax Americana* will last is a more open question.

# BOITEMPO

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## EDITORIAL



### MARGEM ESQUERDA N. 4

(Left Margin No. 4)

This issue presents six essays discussing political representation and the modern role of political parties, with contributions by **Emir Sader**, **John Holloway**, **Ricardo Antunes** and others, as well as a provocative interview with **Michael Löwy** and articles by **Paulo Arantes**, **Jorge Grespan**, **Francisco de Oliveira** and **José Luis Fiori**.

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# BOOKFORUM

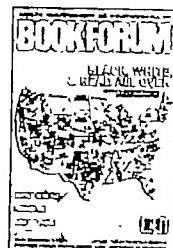
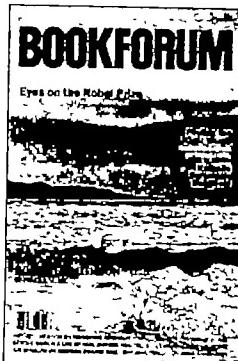
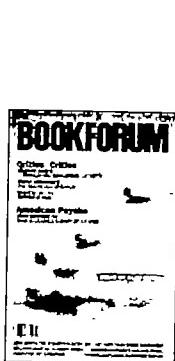
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Julian Stallabrass, *Internet Art: The Online Clash of Culture and Commerce*

Tate Publishing: London 2003, £14.99, paperback

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BLAKE STIMSON

## THE CROWD IN THE MACHINE

Any social movement worth its salt has an origin myth: Rosa Parks for civil rights campaigners, Stonewall for gay liberation groups or, more recently, the Battle of Seattle for anti-globalization activists. In the long run, however, the historical status of these myths is unimportant. Their greater consequence—the part that endures in the practices of everyday life and sometimes flourishes in later political change—resides in the distinct pattern, rhythm or form they bring to collective purpose and belonging. Art has often sought to express such forms in order to justify its place in the modern world. The limits of this aspiration have been a primary concern for Julian Stallabrass over the course of a number of substantial books—from *Gargantua* (1996) to *High Art Lite* (1999) and, most recently, *Art Incorporated* (2004). Art, he writes in the earliest of these, ‘finds itself in a precarious and unhappy situation. It is no longer given a semblance of coherence by the avant-garde rebellion, and it is largely isolated from political and social movements.’

On one level this unhappiness could almost be taken as a definition for what modernism has, with occasional exceptions, always been. On another, it might be seen as expressing a feeling that has become particularly acute in recent years—the malaise of a modernism that has long since fallen behind its contemporaries. Stallabrass has tended towards the latter view, but in *Internet Art: The Online Clash of Culture and Commerce* he strikes a more positive note, finding in a diverse set of web-based initiatives and interventions the makings of a new avant-garde. Indeed, at the beginning of this insightful work—originating in an exhibition he curated at Tate Britain, whose publishing arm have produced this stylish and richly illustrated volume—he

asserts that in its current form, internet art is 'the most conceptually sophisticated and socially conscious area of contemporary practice'.

This is a bold claim, all the more so because Stallabrass's subject tends to elude easy classification. The root definition of internet art as a distinct genre is both simple and conventional. Its aim is to take the distribution mechanism of the internet itself—hardware, software, wired and wireless interconnectedness, multi-user functionality and interactivity, anonymity, search engines and the preferences built into their algorithms—as both its means and its concern. The medium, in other words, is the message. Various exceptions to this rudimentary definition have been raised, and it is routinely enlarged to include other networked technologies such as cell phones, beepers, fax machines, and human networks more generally; but as a rule, this is it.

Many of the artworks discussed by Stallabrass perform Situationist-style *détournements* and *dérives*, re-routing web-surfers away from the instrumentalized pathways of the corporate netscape. Elsewhere, online artists have appropriated data or imagery as electronic readymades, and several pieces discussed here have clear antecedents in Conceptual Art. Stallabrass describes a wide variety of practices, ranging from irreverent parody—such as Tomoko Takahashi's spoof word-processing programme 'Word Perfect'—to critical probings of the corporate world, all simultaneously dependent upon and at one remove from the workings of the world wide web. The group i/o/D devised a programme which strips away the visual content of web pages to reveal an intricate tracery of links and code—an X-ray of the virtual world which, while uncovering the structures of that realm, can only be propagated within it. Others, such as the duo working as Jodi, produce web pages that introduce glitches into the smooth functioning of browsers or subvert the slick graphics of computer games.

This sort of trouble-making is central to internet art as a genre but ultimately secondary to its larger critical promise; the latter cannot be encapsulated by a single work but is rather a function of the practice as a whole. One could describe this potential, using a term popularized by Joseph Beuys, as technologically enabled 'social sculpture'; though this tends to suggest a medium or style, whereas internet art is driven by an aesthetic property or ideal—as the Italian Futurists were by speed, the Surrealists by chance, and various social realisms by the mass. Indeed, much as in crowd management techniques of the past, here email bulletin boards, online public databases and self-replicating computer viruses are all understood as plastic media that not only serve the various instrumental (and anti-instrumental) aims of their designers, managers and users, but also well up with a value that exceeds the sum of their parts—as pleasing or displeasing in their interconnected form.

This moment of aesthetic potential, when the interconnected forms of network technology become art, is like a switched-on, disembodied version

of the experience Elias Canetti described in his 1960 *Crowds and Power*: 'In that density, where there is scarcely any space between, each man is as near the other as he is to himself; and an immense feeling of relief ensues.' Such a swoon of collectivized feeling is the promise (or threat) drawn on and negotiated by internet art and, much as for the crowd, it is intimately interconnected with any stake made for its social or political value. Stallabrass is less concerned with the aesthetic dimension of collectivity peculiarly available to internet art, however, and instead assesses its artistic and political vitality by its distance from the peril of the market.

Stallabrass tracks the political, economic and technological development of the internet, and of its broadly dispersed and innovative art, wisely and well. In thematically organized chapters—such as 'The Structure of the Internet', 'The Form of Data' and 'Time and Space, Space as Time'—Stallabrass weaves together critical reflections and empirical information. The latter provides a welcome antidote to the breathless boosterism of recent years, while the former open up topics as diverse as the nature of online time, the limits of interactivity, the reaction of art institutions to the electronic upstarts, and the shared future of humans and machines.

Stallabrass gives a succinct account of the early history of the internet, from its origins in Pentagon research in the late 1960s to its rapid colonization by commerce in the early 1990s. The latter development was facilitated by the arrival of internet service providers (ISPs) and browser software for public use—which were also preconditions for the rise of web-based art. Web usage as a whole has, of course, followed previously established patterns of inequality, and is overwhelmingly concentrated in North America, Europe, Japan and South Korea. Yet although it is inevitably dependent on the availability of cheap and easy online access, internet art does not entirely replicate this pattern. Its reception is difficult to measure, but is certainly less bounded by national identities than much web traffic. Its pioneering producers, meanwhile, emerged not in the US but in Eastern Europe—where high education levels combined with non-conformist artistic traditions—and in the Netherlands and UK, where key roles were played, respectively, by state support for regional art initiatives and by the conjunction of anti-Thatcherite artists and a comparatively advanced IT sector.

The book's principal analytic parameters are marked out by its subtitle—the jostling of 'commerce' and 'culture'. Stallabrass describes well the mutual transformations wrought on each other by business and the internet, and the way in which commercial imperatives have infiltrated not only our means of handling data but our visual experience of the web. The cultural implications of this are clear: like any other art form, internet art threatens to become Internet Art Lite, as critical practitioners struggle to fend off 'those who would turn the Net into a tame, regulated broadcast space, serving as a pervasive and

ubiquitous mall'. Online as elsewhere, commerce is generally in the ascendant; but on Stallabrass's account, internet art is an important part of culture's counter-mobilization. The author is certainly right to focus on the tendency to refusal and negation—a certain Dada-like pranksterism is generally characteristic of the genre—just as he is to argue for its correlative urge to preserve the autonomous domain of culture. But like many of the modernisms and avant-garde rebellions of long ago (Dada included, at least in its Berlin incarnation), this moment can also be evaluated by the extent to which its aesthetic tendencies take on proto-political form. Internet art is unique in the recent history of art in that it has all the trappings of a modern social movement: collective forms of identification and expression, some semblance of organization, a sense of shared mission among its participants. There is also a certain vitality that perhaps stems from an awareness that their work stands at the confluence of rapid and wide-ranging historical and technological changes.

At a minimum, this alternative critical measure is implicit in Stallabrass's account and he begins it with a suitable origin myth. The fabled beginnings of internet art lie, appropriately enough, inside a computer, and were the result of a machine error or software incompatibility. In the midst of an outpouring of random ASCII characters appeared the ersatz filename that was to become the label for a new movement: 'net.art'. Much of its appeal comes precisely from its combination of technological abstraction and absurdity—as Alexei Shulgin, one of its early practitioners, put it: 'a movement or a group can't have a name like some computer file'. In fact, this merely conventional designation seems perfectly suited to a movement that escapes definition, remaining in constant organizational flux—an anti-movement, where the expression of collectivity is reduced to nothing more than a formal container. 'Net.art' evokes the anonymous abstraction of a state-issued, bureaucratically generated identity, pointing to the limits set by power; yet at the same time it denotes a kink in the system, a subcultural group whose distinctive bond is an oppositional technologism.

But if the shared affiliation of internet art's practitioners is abstraction rather than lived experience—all system and no lifeworld—where are the movement's sources of solidarity? The role of the machine itself is crucial here; though this aspect is present throughout Stallabrass's analysis, it is taken up most synthetically and conclusively in the final chapter, '*Art, Intelligent Machines and Conversation*'. Via a consideration of developments in computer gaming, Stallabrass discusses the potential role of intelligent computer agents—steering a path between, on the one hand, the cod Darwinism of the libertarian Right, who see the internet as an avatar of the all-powerful market, and on the other, dreams of digital transcendence. Rather, the promise of new technology, 'in imagination, at least', is that it will 'collaborate with humans in the creation of art, and aid the emergence

of a truly collective, participatory culture'. The machine itself, he suggests, will become an actor in history.

Setting aside the newness of the technology at issue here, we should note that the role Stallabrass potentially ascribes to the machine evokes an old idea—the interrelation of progressive technologization and progressive socialization that has always been the promise of modernity. The echo is entirely appropriate if one sees internet art as marking a return to a largely forsaken avant-garde role. Indeed, many of its practitioners explicitly refer to modernist strategies—as Stallabrass puts it, looking back 'in sometimes Benjaminian fashion' towards modernism and 'recovering its spectral, Utopian ideals, so as to look forward beyond postmodernism'. But a slightly different perspective is opened up if we ask what, exactly, is being technologized? It can be argued that it is decidedly *not* the internet itself in all its high-tech, user-friendly, McLuhanesque splendour that makes the critical difference, at least when considering social movements. It is not the power of the new machine—as a networking tool, for example, or as an interactive medium—but instead the power it has over the experience of subjectivity that endows it with its greatest potential: the capacity for producing self-estrangement; or, in the vocabulary of the period that is being recalled, proletarianization.

Such self-estrangement has been a central theme in recent internet art, above all since ®™ark (pronounced 'artmark') was publicly condemned by George W. Bush in 2000 for their parody website gwBush.com during his first presidential campaign. The group's name, a play on the concept of the registered trademark, shares the hollow form of net.art itself but is further developed by crossing empty technological and legal categories in a distinctive networking project. As they put it on their website, '®™ark is a brokerage that benefits from "limited liability" just like any other corporation; using this principle, ®™ark supports the sabotage (informative alteration) of corporate products . . . by channelling funds from investors to workers for specific projects.' It is, in other words, culture that realizes itself in the form of commerce—and this is its open secret, its method of social organization and of generating collective consciousness. It makes itself strange, and in so doing lays out the material conditions for political action. Similar strategies have been developed by other groups—among them, the Institute for Applied Autonomy, the Bureau of Inverse Technology, 010010110101101.org, Hacktivist.com, the Experimental Interaction Unit, Public Netbase and, most notably, the Critical Art Ensemble. (A member of the latter, Steve Kurtz, was investigated by the FBI earlier this year under suspicion of being a bioterrorist, but has since been charged only with Mail and Wire Fraud—essentially, for impersonating a scientist.)

At issue for all of these groups, as it was put by the founders of the mail list Nettyme where the first discussions about net.art took place, is 'the urgent

need for the production of a collective subjectivity from within the Net in order to counter its oppressive and alienating effects'. More than any medium to date, the internet offers not only a laboratory for such production, but also ample opportunity for field-testing. However, for internet artist-activists just as for modernist avant-gardes before them, the machine itself—the industrial plant then, the information factory now—has been the means simultaneously of alienation and enlightenment, of the self-estrangement of the commodity form and the self-realization of class-consciousness. It might even be argued that modernist art only found its way out of its precarious and unhappy position when it was able to picture culture and commerce, lifeworld and system, man and machine, as indissociable—so intimately bound up with each other that they could not be said to be at odds.

Here, Stallabrass's analysis would benefit from fuller consideration of the aesthetic dimension mentioned above. For the pleasure that modernist art at its best offers is not release from the competitive turmoil of the marketplace—as, for instance, in Matisse's description of his art as an armchair for a tired businessman—but rather more like the release from isolation that Canetti experienced in the crowd. This pleasure—though it can just as easily be displeasure—is an embodied experience of abstraction, of individuality becoming generalized, systematized, collectivized; it is an experience of subject become object, and it has been the hallmark of advanced art from Courbet to Cézanne, Malevich to Heartfield. Then as now, the necessary engine for that abstraction is commodification. The critical question for internet art—which draws sustenance from the 'ubiquitous mall' of the contemporary world far more than did Manet or Picasso—might then be not so much how to stand firm against the threat of commerce, but rather how to draw from new commodity forms the latent politicization they enable when experienced aesthetically.

Modernism developed its formal vocabulary and claim to social agency by asking: what it is like to experience the world as a commodity? As a thing? As a cog in the machine? With one foot planted squarely in the high-tech sector—the day job of choice for most practitioners—internet art is well situated to renew this experiment. In so doing, Stallabrass's brave study suggests, it holds out the promise of a possible way out of the 'precarious and unhappy situation' art has suffered increasingly since the mid-twentieth century. Whether internet art will be able to rise out of this unhappiness and dran an 'immense feeling of relief' from its lived abstraction, its proletarianization, remains an open question. Its ability to adapt its criticisms to a shifting political and cultural environment, its inventiveness and healthy irreverence, provide at least some grounds for sharing Stallabrass's measured optimism.

Neil Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization*

University of California Press: Berkeley 2004, \$21.95, paperback  
558pp, 0 520 24338 2

PETER GOWAN

## AMERICAN LEBENSRAUM

War is famously good for geography and during two world wars Isaiah Bowman, protagonist of Neil Smith's *American Empire*, was the professional geographer closest to the heart of Washington's postwar reconstruction. In 1917, on the eve of the US entry into World War One, the ambitious young director of the American Geographic Society was recruited by Edward House as a central member of Woodrow Wilson's Inquiry, the group charged with preparing US positions for the peace settlement. Bowman was Wilson's chief territorial adviser at the Paris Conference and, in 1921, a founding director of the Council on Foreign Relations with Elihu Root. His geopolitical survey, *The New World*, published the same year, became 'a handbook for the budding American Century'. Bowman was attached to the State Department under Roosevelt's administration, before and during World War Two, and sat on the Advisory Committee on Postwar Foreign Policy from 1942. A visceral anti-communist—and President of Johns Hopkins—he died of a massive heart attack in 1950.

Smith's intriguing contribution to the history of US expansionism is not, as its title might suggest, yet another contribution to theories of imperialism; nor does it cover the postwar period as its subtitle, 'prelude to globalization', might indicate. Instead, Smith focuses upon how the American liberal internationalists of the first half of the twentieth century actually thought about their imperial-expansionist project, and the language that they constructed to legitimate it. In doing so, he reveals the extraordinary continuity of the American expansionist impulse over the past century, and the equally enduring nature of its ideologies, from Wilson to Bush. The 'attempt to apply the principles of the Monroe Doctrine to the world at large' is as apt a summary

of Bush's National Security Strategy of September 2002 as it was of Wilson's efforts to build the League of Nations.

Smith demonstrates how the ideologies of American expansionism constantly dissolve the critical geographical relationships that underlie the enlargement and sustenance of the Empire, into empty universalizing notions which serve to obliterate space—phrases such as Luce's 'American century', for example, or 'globalization' itself. To the extent that the 'geography of the American century' remains obscure, he argues:

the origins, outlines, possibilities, and limits of what today is called globalization will also remain obscure. There is no way to understand where the global shifts of the last 20 years came from or where they will lead without understanding how, throughout the 20th century, us corporate, political and military power mapped an emerging empire. If this book is primarily historical, its main purpose is to provide a missing perspective on the geography of contemporary global power.

Smith's last sentence here may be misleading. Rather than the geography of contemporary global power, Smith offers us Isaiah Bowman's view of the geography of power during the decades of US ascension. An exhaustive exploration of Bowman's archives yields an illuminating portrait of Bowman and his colleagues, the world they confronted and the requirements of the drive for American expansion. Indeed, Smith's fascination with Bowman leads him to explore every facet of his public life and opinions, well beyond the field of foreign relations. The result is a many-sided portrait of the outlook and prejudices of a central figure of the American internationalist elite.

Bowman was born in 1878, a descendant of Swiss Mennonites, and grew up in a poor farming community in rural Michigan, some sixty miles north of Detroit. Strong-willed and pugnacious—there is a passing resemblance to James Cagney—at the age of 22 he seized the chance to break free from village school-teaching and go to college. His geography teacher at Michigan State, Mark Jefferson, helped him on to work with William Morris Davis at Harvard, where the young Bowman fuelled furnaces and shovelled snow to pay his way, but found the work 'encouragingly difficult'. Geography was still in its infancy as an academic discipline in the US. Smith describes the coexistence of German influences—Leipzig-based Friedrich Ratzel's *Die Erde und das Leben*, and his 1898 *Politische Geographie*, for instance—with more pragmatic native traditions of state-sponsored exploration and mapping dating back to Jeffersonian days. Bowman worked for the US Geological Survey in Charleston and Dallas, then moved to Yale where he helped forge the new curriculum, teaching an encyclopaedic range of courses from geology and physiography to commercial and political geography, and pioneering important regional studies.

Smith evokes very well the US 'imperative of expansion' as it was expressed in the early 1900s—citing, for example, Senator Albert Beveridge: 'American factories are making more than the American people can use. American soil is producing more than they can consume. Fate has written our policy for us. The trade of the world must and shall be ours.' The surplus-capital theory of imperialism had first been articulated by the Wall Street journalist Charles Conant in the 1880s. Conant explained the depression of that decade as being caused by the absence of new domestic outlets for America's surplus capital, and urged imperial expansion to open up profitable new fields for investment. Conant's theory was later taken up not only by enthusiasts like Elihu Root and others, but by critics of imperialism like John Hobson in England, and indeed by classical Marxist theory. Smith himself does not dwell on the origins of the expansionist impulse, but seems to accept that it is the tendencies towards domestic overproduction and surplus capital within powerful capitalisms that lead their states to attempt to open other zones for capital accumulation.

Bowman's perspective was not dissimilar. As a 19-year-old in 1898 he had been seized by patriotic 'war frenzy', training his own 100-strong volunteer militia in backwoods Michigan as the Stars and Stripes was planted in Cuba and the Philippines. Ratzel's *Politische Geographie*—adapting organicist notions from the natural sciences to argue that nations needed to grow in order to survive, and hence that territorial expansion, the acquisition of 'lebensraum', was an inherent feature of strong states and peoples—tallied well with Bowman's own inclinations.

In 1907, Bowman set off on the first of three Yale South America Expeditions to the Andes, sailing to Panama—he was impressed by the work on the canal—and then on down the Pacific coast to Peru. Ashore, he attempted to assess the applicability of Davis's 'cycle' of uplift and erosion, with its geomorphology of young, mature and old landscape forms, to the Peruvian Andes; he covered some 10,000 miles by mule, canoe, train and stagecoach. On a later trip (the one on which Hiram Bingham 'discovered' Machu Picchu), Bowman mapped the rapids of the Urubamba River as it raged between sheer canyon walls. Emerging from the Andes onto the edge of a rolling forest-clad region, he found the break from the mountainous realm to Amazonia 'almost as sharp as a shoreline'. Bowman was dismissive of Alexander von Humboldt's early nineteenth-century vision of Amazon forests replaced by teeming cities—the geography was too unforgiving, and labour too scarce. Instead, he saw a rigidly determined landscape—pioneering planters, forest Indians, noble Aymara shepherds, 'devious' Quechua—'a veritable stratification of society corresponding to the superimposed strata of climate and land'. Bowman understood the task before him in more qualified terms than Humboldt had. With prospectors and rubber planters well

established in the Amazon, the Andean barrier to trade with the Pacific coast had become the Americas' last frontier. The period of the *conquistadores* had been one of 'sheer human conquest', Bowman wrote—uncharted territory opened up by the barrel of a musket. But in the age of commerce and capital, conquest was now 'conditional', dependent on the returns to be had on laying railroads across mountains, draining swamps and irrigating deserts; dependent, in other words, on the will and resources of 'the sterner races'.

In 1914, with the Yale South America Expeditions under his belt, Bowman was offered the directorship of the then-languishing American Geographical Society, whose Manhattan headquarters (at Broadway and 155th Street) housed three storeys of maps, survey materials and other crucial resources. Bowman would make the AGS his institutional base for the next twenty years, before his final move to Johns Hopkins. He proved adept at the vicious infighting and incessant jockeying for power which, then as now, characterized the US policy elite, updating and dynamizing the AGS and actively seeking links with US Military Intelligence. When approached by House to join Wilson's Inquiry in 1917, Bowman moved swiftly to ensure that the project would be installed on the top floor of the AGS building, where it would be well insulated from the vocal anti-war movement.

By December 1917 the Inquiry had drafted the basis of what would become Wilson's Fourteen Points—'remaking the map of the world, as we would have it', boasted House. The US delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 was equipped with a Black Book, produced by Bowman, containing territorial solutions for twenty-seven disputed areas of Europe, large-scale maps, complete with ethnic and linguistic as well as physical and political data, and a detailed economic and labour report. With civil war still raging in Russia, Bowman fought hard to extend the Polish borders, and was hailed as a national hero in Warsaw after the War. *American Empire* shows how formative the experience of Paris was for Bowman himself. It not only made his name as a public figure but educated him in international politics and initiated him, a staunch Republican nationalist, into the jargon of Wilsonian expansionism. Smith underlines a simple but important truth: that the efforts of the American liberal internationalist elite to construct a new global order, replacing the world of the European empires, were themselves an exercise in empire-building rather than a naive attempt at re-educating the world around Wilsonian ideals. Or, to put it another way: the ideals were the banner of a group engaged in a bid for global power.

Bowman and his colleagues deployed Ratzel's concept of *lebensraum* as an essentially economic idea: American growth demanded expansion on a global scale. What rightly fascinates Smith is the way this layer came to grasp that they could organize a new type of world order, one that could both anchor American global dominance and structure the entire capitalist world

to ensure that all the main centres could acquire adequate lebensraum for themselves within it. Underlying their vision was the widespread perception that the world was closing politically as, by the early years of the twentieth century, its territory became incorporated into more-or-less modern states or empires. This sense of closure was particularly strong among geographers, whose work up till then had been closely tied to explorations of uncharted parts of the globe; the Yale Expeditions were among the final flickers of that age. As Smith notes, Rosa Luxemburg believed the closure of global frontiers would lead to a collapse of capitalism. For Lenin, in contrast, the consequence of closure was that international politics among capitalisms would now be about redividing the spoils. In 'The Geographical Pivot of History', published in the London *Geographical Journal* in 1904, Halford Mackinder argued that closure would produce a new kind of social and political interdependence:

From the present time forth . . . we shall have to deal with a closed political system, and none the less that it will be one of world-wide scope. Every explosion of social forces, instead of being dissipated in a surrounding circuit of unknown space and barbaric chaos, will be sharply re-echoed from the far side of the globe, and weak elements in the political and economic organism of the world will be shattered in consequence . . . Probably some half-consciousness of this fact is at last diverting much of the attention of statesmen in all parts of the world from territorial expansion to the struggle for relative efficiency.

It was within this context that American leaders pondered the ways in which they might exploit the resources of their industrial capitalism to provide both a 'redivision of the spoils' and a new framework for world order, under their leadership. The breakthrough of the US internationalists of the Wilson period lay in their insight that the linkage between the economics and the political geography that undergirded European capital accumulation could be uncoupled. Economic expansion could be divorced from territorial aggrandisement and the result would be perfectly in tune with US national interests. This idea formed the real programmatic basis for Wilson's moralistic global liberalism. As Smith puts it:

US internationalism pioneered an historic unhinging of economic expansion from direct political and military control over the new markets . . . [anticipating] a world economy in which territorial differences among states were of diminished *economic* significance and in which political squabbles could be regulated to prevent the disruption of trade.

Bowman was by no means the originator of these American solutions to the conundrum of global political closure, but his 1921 work *The New World* played an important role in educating US business and political elites about

the realities of global political geography—both the possibilities that lay before them in world politics and the obstacles to their global leadership. The book helped to shape the public language of us expansionism, marrying its power-political and economic vision with the discourse of American liberalism. Together with his work at the Council on Foreign Relations, it established Bowman's ascendancy in the field.

'Whether we wish to do so or not', *The New World* begins, 'we are obliged to take hold of the present world situation in one way or another', for the us was now too powerfully engaged to do otherwise. And since 'the world has now been parcelled out nearly to the limit of vacant "political space"', the necessary economic expansion of individual nation-states could no longer be accomplished by expanding control in purely political terms, but must take place within 'economic space'. Territorial expansion would be 'succeeded by economic expansion'. But, claims Smith, Bowman grasped that this new world was not to be reached instantaneously and that, during the transition, political geography remained the fulcrum of world power. Bowman's discursive dissociation of economic from territorial expansion is seen as 'expedient', a protection against the accusation that American expansionism was just imperialism in sheep's clothing.

Yet Smith is himself remarkably reticent on the real relationship between geopolitics and us military power, on the one hand, and the reorganization of the world economy for American *lebensraum* on the other. At times he almost seems to be taking Bowman's discourse about dissolving geopolitics into liberal international economics as good coin. In reality, restructuring the world economy to make room for American expansion was always going to be a matter of power politics and geopolitical strategy. The notion that this was just a matter of the *transition* from the old to the new order was ideological evasion. The chief question facing the United States in the first half of the 20th century was how to replace the European powers as the political centre of the world—supremely a question of power politics. But the main question after the transition would be about the power politics of American ascendancy, one in which geopolitics would still retain a pre-eminent place.

Smith does not address this issue head on. Nor does he explore the grand strategy debates about it within inter-war American elites. To do so would involve breaking down the usual political and ideological gulf that historians have established between the 'isolationists' and the liberal internationalists. Isolationism is a label concealing a number of radically different currents. Smith argues that there was a radical antagonism between isolationists who really did want to turn their back on the world and the leaders of the Council on Foreign Relations. But we should not forget that the CFR itself contained leading figures from the so-called isolationist Republican administrations of the 1920s. There was no great gulf between such people and a figure like

Bowman (a Michigan Republican himself, though he did cast an ‘unprecedented’ Democratic vote for Wilson in 1920). The wartime Roosevelt coalition brought both groups together in an amicable partnership. Both were committed, after all, to the drive for American global dominance. And whether by accident or design, the efforts of the 1920s Republican administrations, and of the rather more isolationist Roosevelt administration during most of the 1930s, could be seen, from the angle of grand strategy, as preparing the ground for what followed: the collapse of the Eurasian powers into the Second World War and Washington’s rather easy assumption of world leadership as a result.

Elite isolationism in the inter-war period was not an American retreat from world politics at all. It was a refusal to act as the guarantor and support for the existing world order. On this issue, Bowman was scarcely distinguishable from a Republican like Stimson. *The New World* was not a defence of the status quo, but a statement that the world centred on the European empires is historically over. Yet these empires were still actually at the centre of world politics and the task of the inter-war us was to find and pursue a geopolitics that would overturn this reality. This was the great political theme that Bowman’s Wilsonian liberal feminism made ideologically taboo.

Smith’s discussion of the 1930s, and of Bowman’s extraordinary silence in the face of polemics against him emanating from Germany on the question of geopolitics, provides interesting material on this taboo zone. The *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, founded in 1924 by the Munich-based geographer and World War One general Karl Haushofer, became a focus for strategizing Germany’s demands for lebensraum, drawing on the work of Ratzel, Mackinder and the Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellén. *The New World* was read—quite rightly—as a victor’s view of the Great War’s settlement; nor was Bowman’s role in drawing up Poland’s boundaries in Paris forgotten. The group’s *Macht und Erde*, edited by Otto Maull, described itself as ‘a German counterpart to I. Bowman’s *The New World*’.

As Smith notes, Bowman’s silence in the face of these polemics was very uncharacteristic. His own thought had been shaped by Ratzel. Not only did he follow German geographical debates avidly throughout the interwar period, intervening to defend the geomorphology of Davis’s ‘cycle’, he also visited Berlin in 1934 and had regular dealings with German geographers at international conferences. Yet, never one to avoid a polemic when his reputation or opinions were questioned to the smallest degree, Bowman left the task of spelling out an American response to Haushofer to the Dutch émigré, Nicholas Spykman, whose *American Strategy in World Politics* did not appear until 1942 when the wars at each end of Eurasia were already under way. Only then did Bowman go into print, praising Spykman’s work as a much-needed warning to the American people and accepting the necessity of war

to defend the American way of life. And indeed, Spykman's strategy—for America to focus on conquering and holding the two Eurasian rimlands, Western Europe and Japan—was the one the US followed in the 1940s. But Bowman himself stuck doggedly to the myth that America did not do geopolitics and empire-building—only peace, justice and economics.

This leaves a gap in *American Empire*'s story of the inter-war period. Smith does not penetrate the official myth of isolation and drift. Nor does he consider whether Bowman and others were actually pursuing a fairly coherent strategy of encouraging tensions and rivalries among the European powers, through the politics of war debt and indemnities. At the same time, the Anglo-Japanese link was broken and British naval ascendancy ended at the Washington conference of 1922, thereby ensuring the strategic vulnerability of Britain's Eastern Empire. Smith could not be expected to deal with everything in an already large book, yet the absence of any treatment of the extent to which Bowman's circles guided an interwar US grand strategy remains an important omission.

Perhaps the most valuable contribution that Smith makes to our understanding of US expansionism is his extensive treatment of Washington debates on how to open up the European colonial empires to American capital. This was a pre-occupation of Bowman's throughout his career, from his early days at the ACS right through to his last activities for the Truman administration before his death. The Wilson administration had addressed the question from the very start of the First World War. The Inquiry focused on efforts to secure 'freedom of economic intercourse among self-governing nations'; 'fit' colonies should move towards self-government, while the 'unfit' should be governed by 'international commissions for backward areas'. The historian of Africa, George Louis Beer, seconded to the Inquiry, argued that the notion of international commissions governing colonies was not feasible. Instead, he offered the concept of colonial powers acting under 'international mandates', as trustees, 'primarily for the nations and secondarily for the outside world as a whole'. The interests of the latter would be 'to secure "the open-door" in the fullest possible sense'.

During the Second World War Bowman was again at the centre of discussions about opening up the European colonies. Now in his sixties, he was a leading figure in the Stettinius delegation to Britain in 1944 to discuss post-war plans, with a special brief for colonial issues. Bowman's diplomatic efforts were largely unsuccessful, but by this time he was no longer in favour of dismantling the British empire, preferring its absorption within the new American *lebensraum*. Smith shows that, as early as this, Washington was already repackaging its drive for penetration of the colonial empires under the heading of a programme for economic development in the South, rather than a politics of anti-colonialism. This was a major theme of Truman's 1949

inaugural address. His 'Point iv' called for the Marshall Plan to be followed up with a programme devoted to investment and 'development' in the European colonies and other parts of the Third World. Bowman was persuaded to take charge of this project, though it delivered little of substance in its first years.

Indeed, one of the striking features of US economic strategy during Roosevelt's war-time administration had been the great weight it placed upon opening the European colonies for American business. As Smith points out, the reason for this may lie in the fact that, when the war started, some 60 per cent of its foreign investment was in the southern hemisphere. Yet in the US, industrial capitalism was already being transformed into a mass-consumption capitalism, which would inevitably focus upon capturing other advanced capitalist markets, the only ones capable of supplying a mass-consumer market for American products. But Bowman showed remarkable acuity and insight in grasping that ultimately, the economic significance of the South for American capitalism would lie not just in its role as a source of raw materials and strategic minerals, but as a vast supplier of cheap labour.

At the same time, Bowman also saw the importance for the US of reviving Germany as the industrial hub of Western Europe, not only as a bulwark against the Soviet Union but also to strengthen European markets as outlets for American capitalism. Seconded to the State Department at the onset of the Second World War, Bowman became a leading advocate for a unified and economically strong post-war Germany. War Secretary Stimson, responsible for shifting US policy in this direction against the line of Roosevelt and Treasury Secretary Morgenthau, drew heavily on Bowman's advice. This may, indeed, have been Bowman's principle policy contribution to the postwar order.

One of the mysteries of the United States for many students of American foreign policy is how that policy is actually made. And although Smith does not make this point, his book is a splendid case study of one of the central social mechanisms of American policy-making: the selection and education of an elite of policy intellectuals, who double up as state managers and leaders within the nexus of private, business-funded institutions and universities that form such a central part of the American state. Smith provides us with an extremely detailed and comprehensive account of how Bowman was selected and formed for this role. Though he came from a very poor background, he had all the essential qualities. First, his ethnic background was right—absolutely essential in the early decades of the twentieth century. Second, he was bright and immensely hard-working, self-disciplined and ambitious. Third, he was ready and eager to accept the ruling ideological framework of American society. And finally, he proved adept enough at the vital skills of networking and infighting to rise up through the dangerous world of American elite politics.

Smith provides a vivid portrait of Bowman's culture and mode of operation, replete with accounts of his ferocious ethnocentrism, anti-Semitism and racism, not least as President of Johns Hopkins; of his political manoeuvres and factional tactics; of his sordid betrayals of friends and colleagues—among them Owen Lattimore, thrown to McCarthy's wolves; of the tarnishing of his own ideals for geography as an academic discipline, in his efforts to survive during the turbulent years of the Truman administration. In a chapter on 'The Kantian University' Smith shows how the ideology of positivism, of which Bowman was an avid promoter, served to place elite universities and their research firmly in the service of the state.

Administrations come and go, electoral coalitions rise and fall, but figures like Bowman can be relied upon for decades of uninterrupted service, maintaining the cohesion of the state apparatus and its strategic lines of advance. Smith has given us a first-class account of the mechanisms of state cadre selection at the beginning of the American century. In their structural essentials, they have changed little since then. That their products are capable of real insight is apparent from this portrait of Bowman. One illustration is worth quoting at length, from *The New World*:

United States expansion has in recent years evoked a certain hostility among the Latin-American states, a hostility based on the assumption that their economic and political liberties were at stake, and the United States is therefore confronted with direct and powerful political opposition for the first time since it embarked upon its policy of expansion overseas. Here we have a problem of the first rank. For the people of the United States are as unknown to themselves as they are to the rest of the world. They do not know how they will take interference in their policy of expansion, for in that expansion they have not had, so far, a single misadventure. While such an experience has left them in an amiable attitude toward others and has given them a generous appreciation of the point of view of others, there is danger in that they do not know what fires of passion may be lighted by active opposition.

These reflections, written in 1921, seem as fresh as ever today.